

The Home Invaders

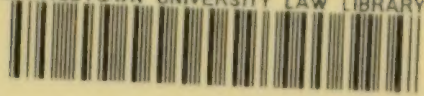
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The Home Invaders

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The Home Invaders

Confessions of a Cat Burglar

Frank Hohimer

With an Introduction by Herbert Beigel



Chicago Review Press

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Publisher's Note

Frank Hohimer's *The Home Invaders* is unique among books by notorious underworld figures in that no ghost writer or professional co-author was involved in its composition. Some editorial revisions have been made: the punctuation has been somewhat regularized; the syntax has in some places been altered for the sake of clarity; and the names of minor characters have been changed. Substantially, however, this is Mr. Hohimer's own account of his life in crime, just as he wrote it down in his cell at Fort Madison, Iowa.

Introduction

I first met Frank Hohimer in the summer of 1971. At that time I was a Special Attorney for the Department of Justice assigned to the Chicago Strike Force, a branch of the Organized Crime section of Justice. Earlier that spring I had been involved in the trial of Leo Rugendorf, the notorious Mafia fence. Rugendorf had a long-standing reputation as a cold-blooded, vicious hoodlum, and we were therefore deeply disappointed when he was able to win acquittal. It looked as though Rugendorf might die a free man.

Then, dramatically, our luck improved. One day in the early part of that summer a man named Frank Hohimer walked into a federal marshal's office in New Jersey and surrendered. Hohimer had had a long and colorful career in crime. His specialty was home invasions and cat burglaries, the most successful of which involved hundreds of thousands of dollars in jewelry and cash. After evading FBI and other law enforcement agencies for many years—during this period he made the “ten most wanted” list—he was finally apprehended in Cos Cob, Connecticut where he had been living with his second wife and operating, apparently very successfully, a pancake house.

The Connecticut authorities assigned Hohimer to their

Bridgeport Prison facility. There he began a long struggle to avoid extradition to Colorado where he was wanted for the theft of \$50,000 in jewels from the Denver home of millionaire Temple Buell. When it became clear that he would lose this struggle, he called on the aid of a New York Mafia family and, with the co-operation of a few well placed prison officials, engineered his escape.

A short time later, he turned himself in. He may have been afraid of the Mafia, or he may have decided he had had enough of running. In any event, he was determined to make the best deal he could with his captors: he told the officer who took him into custody that he had valuable information to provide concerning Leo Rugendorf, and he was swiftly transported to Chicago.

Hohimer in person was not a particularly imposing individual. When I first saw him he was overweight and in poor health. He hardly seemed the smooth professional criminal. At first he expressed second thoughts about cooperating. But when we informed him that failure to testify would result in his quick transfer to Denver—where authorities were eagerly awaiting the chance to jail him for life under that state's habitual criminal act—he began to talk. In exchange for his cooperation we were willing to help him work out the minimum sentence which could fairly be meted out to one whose crimes were numerous and serious, in his case a maximum term for the interstate transportation of stolen goods. We soon realized that Hohimer, although at that time scraggly and uneducated, was street wise and extremely smart. He was a good judge not only of his criminal acquaintances, but also of us.

Hohimer's information proved very valuable, and not just in relation to the prosecution of Rugendorf: it filled gaps in law enforcement's knowledge about ways in which the Mafia was able to generate income through con-

ventional criminal activity. In Hohimer's case, it worked this way. Rugendorf provided highly skilled thieves like Hohimer with detailed information about worthwhile "scores," including such items as pictures of the houses to be invaded, photocopies of jewelry store sales slips and insurance company records, and even in some cases door keys. Upon completion of the robbery, Rugendorf disposed of the valuables and paid Hohimer a fee based on the worth of the stolen goods. Elaborate precautions were taken to insure that only Hohimer knew the identity of the Mafia fence.

These revelations were important, but even more surprising to me at the time was what the Hohimer case revealed about the workings of the FBI. It was only at this point that my fellow attorneys on the Strike Force and I discovered that there was material in the FBI files which indicated that Hohimer had been an associate of Rugendorf for years, that he had long dealt with important members of the Chicago Mafia, that he knew a good deal about police corruption, and that he was a major suspect in the slaying of Senator Percy's daughter. We knew none of this, and yet we were charged with the task of investigating organized crime in Chicago, and we had just attempted to prosecute Rugendorf.

Later I learned that the FBI's failure to provide important information is often by no means accidental. The FBI files are replete with information about organized crime that is never communicated to anyone outside the agency, not even to the United States Attorney and the Justice Department. In fact, it is not unusual for a federal prosecutor to prepare a case for indictment only to be told by the FBI that the proposed defendant is a valued informant and must therefore not be brought to trial.

Indeed, despite propaganda to the contrary, the FBI is

not in the main a law enforcement agency at all, but rather a highly sophisticated and well insulated government spy ring. For the most part it gathers information for the sake of information, and prosecutions can upset the network of informants which provides that information. This is especially true of the section of the FBI that investigates organized crime. In this area impressive conviction statistics (needed to justify the huge sums of money appropriated) are generated by the prosecution of small time bookies and gamblers, minor criminals too inconsequential to upset the intelligence gathering apparatus.

The FBI's emphasis on the amassing of information for its own sake often has the effect of frustrating the efforts of those agencies that are attempting to prosecute the powerful leaders of organized crime. It is not unusual for high level Mafia figures to keep in close touch with the FBI. By funneling to the agency bits of information about those in lower ranking positions who are considered by them expendable, the important criminals deflect investigations from themselves. Certain sections of the FBI in Chicago, for instance, were not happy about our attempt to prosecute Rugendorf; he had been a source of information in the past. In some cases, no sections of the FBI want to cooperate with the prosecutors.

Hohimer's unfolding story also shed light on the role of local police departments in the operation of sophisticated crime. Professional thieves like Hohimer avoid certain apprehension by giving a large portion of their earnings to the police. Such corruption is by no means unusual. In fact, when one closely examines most big city police departments (and especially the Chicago Police Department) the impression arises that they were designed to foster corruption rather than to apprehend criminals. Everything costs

money: vacations, promotions, desirable assignments. The police become involved in licensing and are corrupted by small businessmen who need favors. They are corrupted by the criminals they are chasing because in many ways these criminals wield more power than they do.

Thus, at the time he was engaged in his major burglaries, Hohimer claims that he had found an accommodation with the police and money changed hands. Perhaps coincidentally, this accommodation fell apart at about the same time Hohimer's services were no longer wanted by Rugendorf. Then all at once Hohimer was followed everywhere by the Chicago police. On one occasion, according to Hohimer, he was stopped immediately after he had disposed of stolen goods at Rugendorf's home and had in his pocket his cash fee. The policeman settled for half.

Given Hohimer's extensive knowledge of the Chicago underworld, it was clear to everyone at Justice that a deal should be negotiated with him. The mechanics of working out a deal that would satisfy all parties proved however to be extremely complex. Four separate legal jurisdictions were involved. He was wanted in Denver for the Temple Buell robbery; he was wanted in Indianapolis for the celebrated robbery of the Noyes mansion; he was wanted in Connecticut for his recent escape from the Bridgeport prison; and of course behind this impressive list of wanted circulars waited Illinois officials who were eager to question him about the Percy slaying.

We proposed to Hohimer the following exchanges: he would plead guilty to federal charges of interstate transportation of stolen goods in connection with the robberies in Denver and Indianapolis, and he would testify against Rugendorf. We would recommend to the court that

Hohimer be given the maximum federal sentence of ten years. In return for his plea of guilty and his testimony, we promised to try to convince the Colorado, Indiana, and Connecticut authorities to drop all pending charges against him. Meanwhile, Hohimer would remain safely incarcerated in Chicago area county jails until after the federal trial, insulated from outside questioning, publicity, and possible sudden death at the hands of the Mafia. We also promised to take all necessary measures to protect his wife.

Hohimer liked the deal. After all, it was akin to the sort of arrangement made by persons in deep financial trouble. It consolidated his debts, satisfied his major creditors, gave him peace of mind, and held out the hope of freedom in the future. He was not worried about the investigation of the Percy murder. He adamantly denied any involvement, and he knew from newspaper accounts over the years that no reliable evidence had been found.

More than a year of intricate negotiations, however, was required to actually put this arrangement into effect. The Indiana and Connecticut authorities were easily persuaded to dismiss the charges against Hohimer (since they knew he would receive a long jail term for his offences) but the Colorado authorities would not give in. The major antagonist was Jarvis Seecomb, the Denver District Attorney, who may have concluded that a sensational trial leading to an impressive conviction would do much to increase his chances for reelection. The Denver robbery victim, Temple Buell, was one of Denver's leading citizens, and reports of how Hohimer's gang had bound and gagged Mrs. Buell, and how Hohimer had threatened to amputate her finger in order to remove her emerald ring, led to understandable public indignation in that city.

In addition, one officer of the Denver Police Department displayed what seemed to me at first an almost fanatical desire to bring Hohimer to Denver for prosecution. This officer's passionate interest in the case made more sense when I was told that he had traveled to Alton, Illinois to interview Hohimer—not at the request or expense of the Denver Police, but through the good offices and pocketbook of Temple Buell. It seems that Buell had hired this policeman to be his private investigator.

Our first move was to attempt to call Seecomb on the telephone. When we called, however, he was always otherwise engaged. Next we applied political pressure. This pressure persuaded Seecomb to meet with us, but we found him to be strongly of the opinion that Colorado law prevented him from agreeing to any of the various proposals that we advanced. We researched his objections: Colorado law did not prove to be the source of the difficulty. Finally we resorted to another kind of pressure. We told Seecomb that the Justice Department was prepared to grant immunity to Hohimer in exchange for his testimony. We would never have carried through with this threat—but it produced the desired compliance and a deal was set.

Unfortunately by this time—and this is the great irony of the whole affair—Rugendorf was too sick to stand trial. Some months later he died, and Hohimer's testimony, secured with such effort, led only to the conviction of some minor hoodlums.

Hohimer is currently in jail serving his sentence, writing further memoirs, and planning for the future. He is apparently retired from crime forever, but he continues to be the subject of intense interest because of his alleged participation in the murder of Valerie Percy. This is perhaps the place to attempt to correct some serious

misconceptions about that case that have resulted from recent news stories.

Valerie Percy, the twenty-one year old daughter of Illinois Senator Charles Percy, was brutally murdered in the Senator's Kenilworth, Illinois home. This was in 1966. The investigation provoked by this apparently senseless act was of course massive. Local, state, and federal agencies plunged into the case; thousands of suspects were questioned; newspapers aired bizarre theories and rumors; politicians threatened extreme remedies; and Senator Percy offered a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the slayer's conviction.

But when the dust settled and the shouting stopped, about all that remained was two pieces of hard but apparently useless evidence: a bloody palm print at the scene of the crime and the record of a telephone call made from the Percy home to Leo Rugendorf. The print matched none of the suspects. The telephone call led to nothing more than idle and sometimes vicious speculation. No prosecution was possible. The case remained, and remains, unsolved.

The crime would have subsided into richly deserved obscurity had it not been for a series of recent stories by *Chicago Sun-Times* reporters Art Petacque and Hugh Hough. These stories supposedly shed new light on the case, but in fact they were based on information long known to professional investigators. Indeed most of the information they contained was available to anyone who cared to piece together the reports that had appeared in the newspapers over the years.

Chief among these "new" clues was a deathbed statement by Leo Rugendorf claiming Hohimer had confessed to him that he had killed Valerie during a robbery. This deathbed statement, however, was simply a

rehash of testimony Rugendorf had earlier given in court. To this stale information Petacque and Hough added accounts of conflicting accusations made by several of Hohimer's criminal associates and accomplices.

But as any experienced reporter or investigator knows, the most common occurrence in the investigation of any notorious crime is the breeding of confessions, usually false, followed by rumors and accusations about the identity of the perpetrator. In the Percy case the confessions, rumors, and accusations had seven years to accumulate. If Petacque and Hough's reporting accomplished anything, it was the cataloging of all the unsupported charges made over the years. Certainly their stories by no means solved the crime. The public, however, was misled into believing that the crime had been solved.

Their articles did have one positive effect: they helped to silence rumors which may well have damaged Senator Percy's chances to gain the presidential nomination in 1976. As *Esquire Magazine* reported in its June 1974 issue:

Until the brutal 1966 murder of a daughter was solved, vicious calumnies were spread about the Percy family and would have multiplied in a Presidential campaign. Now that the case has been cracked, this ends.

Perhaps all Petacque and Hough wanted to accomplish was to pave the way for a Percy campaign free from "vicious calumnies." Unfortunately they accomplished this noble purpose by accusing a man of murder on the basis of evidence so flimsy no prosecutor has dared present it to a grand jury, let alone to a court. For this dubious service they received a Pulitzer Prize.

It certainly is possible that Frank Hohimer was involved in the murder of Valerie Percy. He was, as this book

eloquently attests, an accomplished home invader and cat burglar. But on the other hand the deed may just as well have been done by any other professional burglar who operated in the Chicago area at that time. And even this conclusion is based on the assumption that Valerie Percy was slain during the course of an aborted burglary. No real evidence exists for this or any other assumption. In short, the answer to the Percy slaying today is the same as the morning after it took place: there is no answer, and it is unlikely that there ever will be one.

More significant than Hohimer's sudden rise to prominence as the accused murderer of Valerie Percy is the fact that for years he had been as sought after, as notorious, and as consistently frustrating to law enforcement officers across the country as any criminal in the nation. To know Hohimer is to gain insight into the inner workings of the criminal mind. Men like him are usually dead before they reach forty, quietly executed by their employers or killed by the police. Hohimer has survived to tell this story.

Herbert Beigel
Chicago, 1974

Preface

My last employment? The Mafia. Wages? Three to five million a year. Occupation? Cat Burglar and Home Invader. One of the best in the nation. I am presently doing thirty years for a \$200,000 heist of jewels from the home of millionaire Temple Buell in the exclusive Polo Club area of Denver.

The mob travels first class, always. I roamed the nation from county to county and coast to coast, from Canada to Mexico. Traveling first class jet, driving Caddy convertibles, Chrysler Imperials, and Lincoln Continentals. Staying in fifty dollar a night hotels and motels. I changed cars and women like most people change socks. I spent a thousand a week and up on the road. I worked nothing but the most exclusive and wealthy sections in the nation. Alleged fabulous jewel thieves like Murph the Surf and Alvie Baker would not have been allowed to carry my tools. They got busted every time they turned around. Alvie got busted in Grosse Point, Michigan. I worked that neighborhood like I had a license to steal. I walked out with millions and they never knew what hit them.

The outfit knows them all: Palm Springs, Beverly Hills, Shaker Heights, Indian Hills, Scottsdale, Fairfield County Greenwich, Westchester County, Terry Town, Wynnewood, Parkview, Pawtucket, Broadmore, Wan-

natchee, Woodstock, Hyannis Port, and the plush sections of Boston, Dallas, Montreal, Quebec, Mexico City. And don't leave out the exclusive far North Side and Lake Shore Drive areas of Chicago.

You name the State and the Mob will give you not only the names of the millionaires and their addresses, but how many people are in the house, a list of their valuables, and where they keep them and when they wear them. I know Liz Taylor's diamonds better than Liz knows them herself.

Those of you that have already been ripped off know the score. Those still on the list don't be alarmed if someone shines a light in your face around two or three in the morning, dressed completely in black and wearing a ski mask and gloves. It is just a burglar the mob sent to pay you a visit.

Don't wonder how he got in. He had a key. Or even even if he didn't, no lock or alarm is going to keep you secure. Your dog? He has been put to sleep with a tranquilizing gun. No sense reaching for the phone, the wires have been cut. If not, the cop you call may be on the payroll.

You can bank your life on three things. The outfit sent him. He knows every piece of jewelry in your house. And he is a professional. The mob keeps crews working around the nation and they never miss. They know exactly where they are hitting, and what they are getting. Their information is precise, there is no guess work. It comes from insurance executives, jewelry salesmen, auctioneers of estates. The same guy who sold you the diamond may be on the corner pay-phone before you get home.

You don't have any police protection. The way these cats work it is impossible to get caught on the job. The best policemen in the world will tell you that when a cat is

working their city, they just hope he is making one score and then leaving. Once in a while they get lucky and stumble up on an amateur. But when a pro goes down, a stool pigeon you are working with set you up, or the mob blows the whistle on you when you get out of line. The outfit is the biggest bunch of stool pigeons on earth.

This is not hearsay. I know from experience. Once you're in there is no getting out. Either they rat you out, or they set you up on a frame with the cops and send you to the joint. Or else someone leaves you in the trunk of a car, or hanging on a meathook like they found Willie Jackson in 1961. Once the mob is on your trail, no protection on earth is going to save you. They say it took Jackson two days to die.

And once the contract is out it is never recalled. Usually the guy who makes the hit gets dumped himself for knowing too much. You can run and run, but one day you will look over your shoulder and the mob is there. They never kill you in the joint, they always wait until you hit the streets. They figure while you are doing time it is a form of suffering (and it is). The government will promise you protection, but they have a pretty bad batting average.

The outfit set me up for the kill in 1967, in Edwardsville, Illinois. They blew that one. I was marked for death, not for any stool pigeon activities (a copper or F.B.I. agent couldn't get the right time of day from me) but for no other reason than I wanted out. To make it look good, they had one of Frank "Buster" Wortman's cronies go my bond. Wortman is a St. Louis ganglord, tied in with the Chicago mob, who runs Missouri and parts of down-state Illinois. I left the bond and the case hanging and went on the ten most wanted list for two years. The cops, the F.B.I., and the mob, they were all looking for me.

In December 1969 the Feds busted me in Greenwich, Connecticut. I had been clean for two years, running a successful Pancake House there. My attorney would not let me call the mob for help, so I spent two years in jail in Bridgeport fighting the case. The mob waited me out.

When my last appeal was turned down the outfit came to me. A member of the Vito Genovese family in New York spent a night in jail to make contact. In return for a million dollar jewel heist they would help me escape and then give me money for bondsmen and attorneys to beat the raps I had going. I was desperate, I took the offer.

I pulled one of the smoothest escapes ever pulled from the Bridgeport Correctional Center. A few palms were greased, I picked a couple of locks, walked out through the Warden's office, dropped out an unlocked window, and climbed into a new Lincoln Continental across the street where a top Mafia Lieutenant was waiting. One hour later I was in New York with a pocket full of money. But I knew they would dump me after I made the score.

So I double-crossed the mob and turned myself in. The F.B.I. agents almost fainted. Two weeks later I was on my way back to Chicago to talk to the Chicago Strike Force on Organized Crime. I knew then I was sealing my own death warrant, but what the hell. At least I was out of the mob, and I was staying out, no matter the cost. For the next two years I was the property of the Strike Force. I was moved to so many different jails I lost count of them. They took no chances on me getting hit.

Things quieted down for the next two years, then all of a sudden in late 1973 I make the national headlines as lead No. 276 in the Valerie Percy murder case. The charge is too ridiculous to write about, based on nothing more than a brief interview with a cop who knows nothing and the

testimony of a few old enemies. If it were not for the tragedy involved to the Percy family, it would be a laughing matter.

No professional burglar ever killed Valerie Percy. They hate killing worse than anything else in the world. Why? Because it creates a lot of unnecessary heat. A professional never stoops to murder. He does not have to. He takes the entire mansion over within a matter of minutes. I have taken over bigger mansions with more people in them than the Percy's with no problem. So what if the alarm goes and the mere wisp of a girl screams. You just go get the rest of the members of the house, or else leave. It takes the cops a good twenty minutes to get there. I have been in houses where the alarm went off. There were very few homes I have been in where the woman did not scream from fright. You still hurt no one, you don't have to. Time Magazine said that my gang "worked with military precision . . . they were known for their stealth and daring." I assure you no gang like that is scared by an alarm or a scream.

I have been in hundreds of homes, but I never harmed anyone, I never had to. Why? I was a professional. I always had immediate control of the situation. I worked as silent as any cat and never woke any member of any household making an entry. I was polite to the Buells to the extent of risking being caught. Mr. Buell could not stand to be tied up so I left them all untied. Also I ran the risk of being caught on the Noyes' score. Mrs. Noyes was ill so I gave her her medicine, and left everyone loosely tied and with a squad car parked right in front of the mansion! No professional burglar ever killed that girl. Read this book and you be the judge.

I am in more trouble and danger of my life than any family I ever robbed. If nothing else on earth signed my

death certificate this book alone would do it. I don't recall when I was born anyone giving me a contract to sign of how long I had to live. When I do go I will go with the knowledge I pulled out of the mob and I stayed out against all odds.

No, I will never be a burglar again under any circumstances, even knowing full well I can make a million dollars any night of the week for an hour's work. No price on earth is worth your freedom or your wife and babies. I also know if it takes a thousand years the mob will keep on looking for me.

1



“Oklahoma” Smith

I was standing in front of a judge and prosecutor in a courtroom in Chester, Illinois on a writ of Habeas Corpus I had written myself. I wasn't even breathing. The Judge pushed his glasses up on his nose, wiped back a grey lock of hanging hair. Looked up at me.

“I hereby order this prisoner discharged from custody of the Illinois State Penitentiary, order to take effect now.”

I breathed, I never said thank you, nothing, not a word. I didn't think I owed anyone any thanks, hellos, or good-bys. I had just flattened out eleven years and three months of a fifteen year beef. Fifteen lousy real hard fucking years back and forth between two of the most brutal, lousiest prison systems in the State of Illinois. For a goddam \$40 robbery you are more guilty of than I was.

Do you think anyone would believe I was innocent? No. I had a record as a juvenile delinquent, plus I had stole a car once, and married a sixteen year old girl, her parents didn't approve me. (I got a year for contributing to the delinquency of a minor. We were married, that didn't count.) I was in trouble in Stateville and Menard from the day I walked in until the day I walked out. I spent as much time in the hole in segregation as I did in the regular prison population.

When I walked out on the courthouse steps it was

snowing and a cold bitter wind hit me. It was not anymore cold and bitter than I felt. My mother, sister, and sister-in-law had drove nearly 300 miles in a goddamn old car that wouldn't hardly run. I am sure they were happy. We got in the car, my mother wanted to make conversation.

"Well son, you're still young, thirty-three years old. You have paid your debt to society, you don't owe anybody anything."

"Mom, you really believe I was guilty?"

"It doesn't matter son, your debt is paid in full."

I thought, no, it doesn't matter if someone takes eleven years out of my life, for a debt I didn't owe, and it don't matter.

"You have two nice trades now, you're a master barber and a good musician."

"Yes Mom, I have two good trades, they also gave me this \$10 suit." They give most convicts \$50 cash. I never got a dime. I didn't tell her, Mother, I have another trade no one's ever going to know about if I can help it.

"Mom, I never slept at all last night, mind if I try to catch a wink?"

"No son, you go ahead."

I laid back in the corner of the seat, she held my hand. The car reeked of cheap perfume, a strange smell after eleven years. I couldn't have slept with a shot of morphine. My mind was running away with me. Mom, if you only knew what that hand you are holding can do.

I had spent a lot of time in the cell, and every minute on the yard I could get, with what I believe was one of the slickest cat burglars and jewel thieves who ever existed. I say slick because he was never ever caught. Okla Smith was doing a life bit for killing his wife, he was never arrested for burglary. He had learned the business from a Frenchman.

Okie had a code of rules he laid out for me. (Years later I started violating a few of the rules and that is exactly why I am now doing time for a \$200,000 jewel robbery.) Okie's rules were:

Never lie to no one. If a man was your friend, you wouldn't want to lose him over a lie. And if he isn't who in the fuck is he that you have to lie to him?

Never trust a liar, get away from him faster than you would get out of the path of a speeding train.

Never use a partner, guys coming up today are not like the ones from the old school. These punks are all stool pigeons when the heat gets on.

Don't dress flashy, or buy new Cadillacs.

Never carry a gun, you don't need it.

Always keep your face and hands covered on a burglary.

Never go in a house where the people are not home.

Never commit a burglary on a Friday or Saturday, someone from that home may come home late from a party, you're working so you won't hear them.

Check the garage and estate for toys, you will have an idea of how many people and children are in that house. Don't even bother checking children, they will sleep through anything, noise will hardly wake them up.

Check the refrigerator the very first thing. If there is a small baby in that house, ninety-nine times out of a hundred there will be a formula in the refrigerator. Heat it up, find the baby and put the bottle in his mouth, and then change the diaper. If that baby wakes up, a mother's instinct is to wake up the second that baby cries hungry or wet.

Open every door on the ground floor, so you have plenty of exits, then lock them back just like you found

them before you leave. That way the cops will run in circles looking for an inside job.

Before you work a neighborhood, make damn sure you know how the cops and security patrol work. In some really wealthy communities they get out of their car and check doors.

Never drive a car in the neighborhood. If anything goes wrong the first thing the cops will look for is a car driving out. Or some nosy neighbor might jot down the number.

Park your car miles away so you get back to it just when people are starting to drive to work. If you're driving at 2 or 3 in the morning, you might throw a stop from a nosy copper. You can fall in with the morning traffic and drive right out of the city.

Never take mink coats, paintings, large objects.

Pop the stones out of the mounting as soon as possible, never lock anything in the trunk of your car, where you can't get to it. You can hold a million dollars in diamonds in the palm of your hand, and you can swallow them or throw them away on a rumble.

Don't worry about the cops, they don't even know you're in the neighborhood, you know they are.

Always wear a black suit, white shirt and tie, crepe sole sneakers, gloves, and a ski-mask. Pin your suit up in front when you start to work. Never use the slip-on sneakers, they might come off when you run. Use the tie kind. When you get back to the car, change clothes as soon and as fast as possible, throw shoes and all out along the highway. If some crime lab wishes to check them out for soil or material they're all theirs, they don't belong to you.

Work on real dark nights, that way in black you blend in with the night. Be cautious when you have to pass a parked car in driveways or on the street, maybe someone is

sitting in it. If you have to run there's no way they can catch you over back fences and through yards.

Never leave tracks crossing a wet or dewy black top, some sharp cop might spot those tracks and know they are not supposed to be there. Lay down and roll if you have to, he won't know what crossed.

Never wear deodorant or shaving lotion, the strange scent might wake someone up. The more people there are in a house, the safer you are. If someone hears you moving around they will think it's someone else.

If they call, answer in a muffled sleepy voice. They can't see well in the dark, your eyes are accustomed to it.

Never turn on any lights, use a small pen light.

Listen to their breathing. If they are awake they are controlling their breathing, asleep it's normal.

Never be afraid of dogs, they can sense fear. Most dogs are friendly, snap your fingers they come right to you. Call them lightly right out of the house, roll them a ball, throw a stick, they will go get it.

Never, never never hook up with the outfit or Mafia. They are the dirtiest son of a bitch's on earth.

Never carry any I.D., you may lose it, or anything in your pockets that will jingle. Always carry five one-thousand dollar bills. If you lose them they mean nothing, but many and many a cop will take them and you are on your way.

Keep in mind, kid, until your dying day, the only crime anywhere in the world is being broke. With money you make and buy your own justice. If you ever get broke, kid, quit stealing.

That was just a few of the things Okie drilled in my mind day after day, year after year.

Okie and I paid off the screws in the joint to bring us

different kinds of locks. When we were finished with them we would give them back and buy some more. They never brought a lock Okie couldn't open. I worked with those locks year after year, and at times I got so goddamn disgusted I said, "It's no use Okie, I am just too dumb."

"Stay with it kid, you're doing wonders. We are friends, I am doing a life bit, how will I ever pay my debt to society if I can't send them back a good burglar and jewel thief?"

I stayed with him and in a couple of years I could open any lock in the joint. I read everything I could get my hands on about diamonds, precious and semi-precious stones.

Okie told me about carats, carbon, calon, blue-white, off-color, facets, brilliance, the cut, minor diamonds, yellow diamonds, black diamonds. About emeralds more expensive than diamonds, about jade, the different shades from different countries. (Chinese jade, Okie said, is the best. Never try to have a ruby cut, it can be shaved a little. With pearl you can always tell, between your teeth it will have a sandy taste.) I could write a book on what I learned from Okie.

We were getting close to Beardstown, Ill. Mom said, "you had a nice sleep?"

"Not bad."

"Where are you going to work?"

I didn't have the heart to tell her I had no intentions of ever working again as long as I lived.

"I could have bought you a nice business. I am not sure those lawyers gave me what I got coming, it wasn't very much but it's all gone now."

I knew very well the incident she was talking about. My mother can't read or write, but my two sisters Carol and Ruth had wrote me in prison about it. My mother and step-

father had lived in Petersburg, they had been going there about 2 o'clock in the morning. The rail-road crossing three blocks from the house had no signal-lights. A train hit the car, drug it a couple of blocks, killed my step-father, and my mother was in the hospital with damn near every bone in her body broke for almost a year.

I think she got \$3,000, some crooked fucking lawyer in Springfield, Ill., took it all.

I can't recall his name now, but at one time I used to pass it on to every burglar I knew. Later two cat burglars tore that fucking city apart looking for him, they terrorized the city and made the police look like the idiots they were. In 1964 I told a lie on that lawyer. I told Nick Guido the lawyer's wife had a 6-karat stone and he had a perfect 2½ karat. I said I had saw an insurance list. I hadn't saw anything. But I knew Nick and Frankie Yander had a torture crew out working, they would go in wealthy homes and torture the people. If Nick could have found him he would have cut his balls out. Nick and Frankie later got caught and got 199 years.

I stayed at my mother's that night. The next morning I walked over to my sister's. It was still snowing. I borrowed ten dollars, ten dollars was a lot of money to her. We had always been poor. I remember one time a cop took her and I home late at night, it was cold and snowing. We had snuck out of the house, and we were uptown looking through the store windows at toys. My father worked on the W.P.A. We never got shit, it took every penny he could get to feed all eight of us. My sister was worried. I kissed her and walked out in the snow.

2



The Cat

I was standing by the highway hitch-hiking when some woman about 45 stopped and picked me up. I put Okie's first lesson into practice. He said most guys look at a broad's ass, legs, and tits. Always look at her hands and see what kind of diamond she has on. Then look where you want to. This broad didn't have shit, a plain gold wedding band.

She was going to St. Louis. I figured one city was just as good as the next. St. Louis was probably better than Springfield because it was bigger. Okie said never steal where you live, and I was going to rob some bastard. She dropped me off right downtown by the bus station. I think she was kind of happy to get rid of me. I wasn't very communicative, and she knew something was wrong with me but she couldn't put her finger on it. After eleven years in the joint, being on the streets was like being on another planet. I got out, found a dime store, bought a cheap knife with about a 6-inch blade for \$1.32, a 12-inch long thin metal ruler for 33¢, a package of safety matches, a 29¢ pen light. At a cheap clothing store I bought a pair of tennis shoes for \$3.71, a pair of gloves, and a ski-mask. Then I dropped everything in a paper bag, walked back to the bus station, got a phone book, went looking up doctors' and lawyers' names. I finally found enough to get the general

side of the city they lived in. (I checked the yellow pages against the white pages.) I figured if they was living in that neighborhood, it was fairly decent.

Now I knew what neighborhood I was going in, all I had to find out was which direction to go. I walked over to a phone booth, cut the piece of plastic that had the map on it out of the center of the phone book. I looked around, found a bus stop, and what direction I wanted to go. Then I went back, found a 75¢ movie, and stayed there until 8 o'clock. I don't even recall the show. After I bought two coffees and a hamburger I had less than \$4.00 left.

I got on the bus, rode to the end of the line, got off and started walking. It was cold as a son-of-a-bitch, but the neighborhood looked nice, not real wealthy, but way above average income. At that time I had no idea what the homes were worth. At the first opportunity when there was no cars coming, I got off the streets. I went over two or three back fences and a couple of yards (I was in top athletic condition). I found a garage, saw two cars in it, went in. It was a little warmer in there than outside. I changed shoes, put my prison shoes under a bench, pinned up my dark suit coat, put the ski-mask over my head (but didn't pull it down) took my hankie and wiped off the plastic, the knife, and the steel ruler. I had no I.D. on me. If I lost anything it couldn't be traced to me.

The only rules of Okie's I was breaking was that I hadn't laid out the neighborhood for the patrols, and I didn't have five one-thousand dollar bills on me. I was stealing broke. Okie had said, "Kid get a job, save your money and then steal, if anything happens you got money for a bondsman and a lawyer." I started looking around the neighborhood. Some people were still up watching T.V., lights were on in houses. But Okie had said, "Kid they can't

look out and see you with the lights on. Just be careful and don't cast your shadow across a window." I picked out three homes in the area I was going to work, straight down one street. I wanted to be able to keep an eye out for squads.

Some people started retiring about 10 and 11. At about 1 o'clock I started to work on my first house. It was a nice ranch-style home. I had never burglarized anything before in my life. It was my first job. I went up to the back door, took the piece of plastic out of my pocket and tried to slip the lock. The son-of-a-bitch broke, plastic does not work too well in cold weather, it gets brittle and snaps. I took the knife and cut a piece of stripping away from the door frame and eased the knife blade in against the lock. It clicked back. I slowly turned the knob and started to ease open the door. The son-of-a-bitch had a chain. I closed the door, went out to the garage to look for a coat hanger, couldn't find one, so I broke the radio aerial off the car, bent the small end into an L-shape, went back, eased the door open a crack, hooked the aerial into the chain, and eased the chain out of the slot. I opened the door, caught the chain, unhooked the aerial, not a sound. I was in, but like an amateur, no good. It took me twenty minutes to get in that house. I closed the door, went back outside and then opened the door on the house directly across the street. I slipped in the knife along the side of the strip, the lock slipped right back, no chain. I opened up one more house that way and then I waited half an hour to see if I had tripped any silent alarms.

Nothing happened. I went back across the street, went in the first house, closed the door, pulled down my mask, got a little warm. My eyes grew accustomed to the dark. I squatted down, flicked my pen light across the kitchen

floor real fast. I didn't want to kick any chairs or fall over anything. When I flicked that light on it seemed like every light in the house came on. I knew they hadn't, it was just the suddenness of the light, and mentally I was afraid anyway.

Eleven years in the joint for shit, now I was doing something. I assure you I wasn't going to take no pinches. I would have jumped through a window with twenty guns trained on me. Seemed as though my heart was beating so fast, I was sure everyone in St. Louis could hear it. It took me about ten minutes to come back to normal, it seemed like ten hours. That is a hell of a frightening feeling to walk into someone's house when they are sleeping. I don't think there is another like it on earth.

I walked across the kitchen and stepped into a heavily carpeted hallway. I waited a second. Then I swept the floor real fast with the pen light, walked to the living room, swept it with the light, opened the front door. Now I had two exits. I came back to the kitchen, opened the refrigerator, didn't see any baby formula. By now my eyes were pretty well accustomed to the light and darkness in the house. I checked out other rooms in the house. Then I walked into the master bedroom.

My heart was pounding. There was a man and woman in the bed. I was sure they could hear me. After a few minutes my heart came back half-way to normal. I squatted down and eased the glove off my right hand. I started easing my hand under his pillow, never taking my eyes off his eyes.

There was no gun under his pillow. I pulled my hand back out. He was still sleeping and breathing normal. I kept looking into his eyes. I slipped my glove back on, opened the night-stand drawer real slow, put my hand

inside, felt around for a gun. Nothing. Still watching his face, I backed over to a chair, took his pants, found a bunch of bills in a money clip. I put them in my pocket.

She turned over in bed. I stood motionless. But she was still sleeping, so I walked to her side of the bed. One hand was out from under the covers. No rings on that hand. I lifted the covers lightly, put the pen light close to her hand, flashed it downward, shielded by the cover so it would not hit either one in the face. No rings. I walked over to the dresser, still watching the bed, and I raked the pen light across the top. There was a jewel box. I opened it, it was full of earrings, but no rings. I opened a couple of dresser-drawers, found a loaded 38, put it in my pocket. Where in the fuck were her rings! I walked in the bathroom, looked around, ran the pen light over the sink. There lay a wedding ring and engagement ring, she must have left them off when she washed. I put them in my pocket, went to the kitchen, opened the refrigerator, and drank a quart of milk. I was thirsty. On my way out I locked the door behind me.

I started to cross the street, but a car was coming. I squatted down by a bush. The car coming was a squad. I got the 38 out of my pocket. But they drove right by, I watched their tail lights fade out of sight. Hell, they didn't know I was within a million miles.

I was growing more confident now. I walked to the house across the street, opened the back door, went in, let my eyes grow accustomed to the dark, swept the floor with the pen light, laid my sack full of jewelry on the kitchen table, walked to the refrigerator, no formula, opened the front door, checked out all the rooms. There were five people sleeping in this house, two married couples and one elderly lady. I worked fast but was very careful and quiet. I

got three purses, took the money from one guy's pants pocket, one money-clip was laying on the dresser. In one of the dresser drawers I spotted a bank-book with a lot of bills in it. I was doing all right in this house. I made two trips out to the garage with their stuff, sorted out what I thought was good. My sack was bulging, I would have to get another one. The kitchen clock had said 3:15 so I still had time.

I went down two blocks, there was a beautiful ranch-style home on the corner. I took the steel ruler and slipped a real easy lock on the garage door. There were two new Caddys in the garage. I laid my full sack on the ground outside the garage door. I checked the house, no alarms. I checked the front door, it was still unlocked. I walked in, closed the door. The house was fairly well-lighted from the corner street light. I went into the kitchen, checked the refrigerator, checked out all the rooms real fast. Only two people in this house.

I was growing real confident now. I got his money, her purse. I looked at his hand, it was out from under the cover. He had a nice diamond. I went around to her side of the bed, raised the covers. She had on a nice set of rings. I thought for a few minutes and decided screw it, I am here, I got time, I am going to wake these people up. I'll put the gun on them.

I walked to his side of the bed and put the pen light close to his face. When I flicked the switch, the light hit him full in the face. He was blinded, he couldn't see anything.

"This is a robbery, no one is going to be hurt, just do as you are told."

I was standing back far enough so he couldn't grab the gun if he tried. I took the light off him and switched it to his wife's face. I didn't want her to see the ski-mask and

become hysterical. She came awake, and by now he was adjusting to being woken up. They both were badly frightened, but not hysterical. They wanted to turn on the lights. I said no lights.

“First of all, both of you take off your rings.” They complied with my wishes. I said, “If either of you are ill and take any type of medicine, now is the time to tell me. I will have to tie you up in order to get away.”

Neither were ill. I turned sideways while she slipped on a robe. From a closet, I got a handful of neck ties. I had him lay on his stomach while I bound his hands and feet. Then I asked her if there were any more jewels or money in the house. She checked around, said “I believe you have everything.” I had her show me the phones in the house. I ripped out each one. I asked her which car in the garage the keys in her purse fit. She told me the black one. Then I trussed her up.

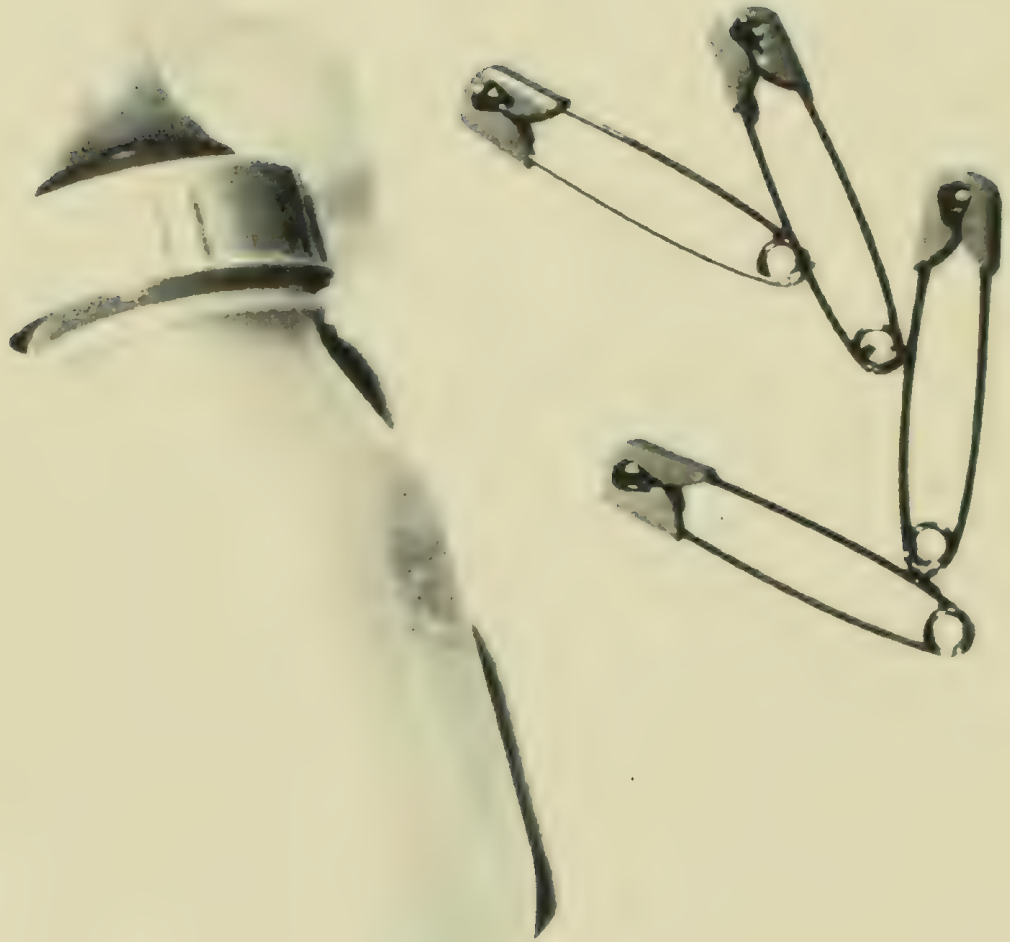
I had spotted an attache case in the living room. I emptied it out, put everything in it. I went to a closet, took out a top coat and a pair of shoes. Both were much too large for me, but I put them on anyway. I went into the bathroom, took a couple of towels, stuffed them in the attache case so nothing would rattle. The pen light, ruler, safety pins, ski-mask, and tennis shoes I left on the table. The kitchen clock said 5:30, time to go. I went out and got the car started.

Backing out I ran into the shrubbery. It was a damn good thing it was still dark out, and traffic was light. If some cop stopped me I was dead. I was the world's worst driver, after eleven years without driving I was lost. I don't know how I made it four or five miles from there, but I pulled into a big apartment complex, parked, took some bills out of the attache case, walked about four blocks to an

all-night restaurant, ordered coffee, got change, called a cab. I had to ask the waitress the address. When the cab came, I told him to take me to a middle-class hotel downtown. I got a room and slept until two in the afternoon.



3



First Broad

I woke up, showered, dressed. I looked through the attache case and counted out the money. I had \$3,302 cash, there was some fairly nice looking jewelry. I knew where to get rid of it, but first I had to get rid of those clothes.

I left the hotel, found a clothing store, paid \$165 for a suit, and bought a shirt and tie, gave \$135 for a top coat. They altered the pants while I waited. I walked out to a shoe store and gave \$31 for a pair of shoes. I felt better. I took a cab to the Paddock Lounge, a joint belonging to Buster Wortman, East Side rackets boss. I didn't know him, I had never seen him before in my life.

I asked the bartender for him. He said, "What is your name?" I said, "The name does not matter friend, it wouldn't mean a thing to you. I am a friend of Bama Simons." (Bama was doing a life bit for dragging the mayor of West Frankfort, Ill. down the street behind a car. He was a member of the old Charlie Berger gang. Charlie was hanged.)

He made a call, hung up the phone, and said Buster would be around between 9 and 10 o'clock that night. I called him back to the end of the bar. I said, "Pal that is no good, I have to see this guy now."

I opened up the attache case. He took one look and said he understood. He dialed again, I could only hear his end of the conversation.

"I think you better see this guy boss. I'll have Blackie bring him over." He dialed another number, said "Listen Blackie you got to come over here right away." He returned to me and said, "There will be a guy over here in about thirty minutes to take you to Buster's house. I couldn't say anything on the phone, the fucking feds have everything tapped."

I knew it was the guy the minute he walked through the door. The bartender motioned for me and said go with this guy. We drove to Collinsville, Ill., to an estate, a big beautiful mansion.

We rang the doorbell and were brought into the living room and invited to sit down. One guy started asking me questions. Where did I know Bama from? I said I just came out of the joint. He asked me about several more people in the joint, and had me describe them. Finally he said, "OK, what have you got." I opened the attache case, and the other guy went through everything. He took a diamond-gauge out of his pocket and put a jeweler's glass on his eye. (He must have been a jeweler, I don't know and didn't care.) He pushed about ten pieces to the side. "These we don't want to keep. You can get four thousand dollars for the rest of this stuff." I said, "Is that the best you can do?" He said, "Yes. We all have to make a living." I felt I was getting screwed, but there wasn't much I could do. I took the four grand and gave him everything. I was clean when I walked out. I could stand a pinch, and I had close to seven grand on me. No one could identify me for shit. I could make bond and hire a lawyer if I needed it. Blackie wanted to borrow a C note. I said "I'll do better than that, take me to Springfield, and I'll give you two of them." We were on our way. He dropped me off on 6th & Jefferson. When I had passed this corner three days ago, I didn't have a dime. I now had close to seven G's.

I walked down to the Governor Hotel barber shop and got a shave, talked with the barber, an old man named Stu, told him I was from California but had an Illinois barber's license. He gave me a job. I told him I would start in two days, I had to buy all my tools. I rented a room next door in the hotel. Then I found a Western Union office and wired Okla Smith \$1,000 at the Menard State Prison. Along with the money I sent a small message signed with a phony name: "I am killing them kid. My love to the warden."

Between Jefferson and Washington, a slum area in Springfield, there is a restaurant and bar with a band. I figured it was time to get laid after eleven years, but I didn't even know how to go about it after so long. After I ate, I sat at the bar, ordered a shot of whiskey and drank it down. Three seconds later I was headed for the bathroom to vomit.

The broad who served me was about 45, nice looking. When I came back, she was there. She said I acted like that was the first drink I ever had in my life. I said it damn near was, I wasn't a drinker, I didn't like the taste of it.

I checked her hands out, no rings.

She introduced herself. Her name was Blanche. One of the musicians came over and was friendly with her. I was drinking coke. I sat in with the band for three numbers, I could have screwed anything in the joint when I came down. I think Blanche was astounded I was a good musician.

She said, "There is something strange about you, I don't know what it is." I said, "Not really, I am a stranger in the city, I know no one. And I have no one." Now she was really shook, I could see it all over her. She said, "Listen don't give me that bullshit, you're a handsome guy. I know damn well you are married or have a girl friend."

I said, "Really I don't. I am just not much of a liar."

"What other things don't you do so well?"

I said, "I am a first class barber (she was giving me the come-on and I didn't have enough sense to know it). She turned my hand over and looked at it, it was soft as a woman's.

That's when she told me she owned the place, was a divorcee, and not shackled up. I asked what does all this mean to me? This broad was really puzzled, she was neglecting customers. I said, "Well I think I will go home."

"Why don't you stick around another hour. I don't close the place up, a relief comes at 12 o'clock and closes for me at 2. I'll buy you lunch in a lot better place than this." I thought why not? I might get lucky and get laid yet.

We walked out at 12, she gave me the car keys. She had a new Ford Falcon. First I couldn't find the switch, next I couldn't find the lights. She was a little puzzled. She said you sure you can drive? I said I never drove that kind of car before. How in the hell I got out of the parking lot, I don't know. Once on the street, I drove about two blocks. It's damn good thing it was night again. She put her foot on the brake, said please let me drive. I got out and in on the other side.

This broad was really scared, she was shook up. She kept looking at me, but she didn't talk. We finally pulled into a restaurant. Once inside and sitting down this broad was so screwed up and nervous she couldn't light a cig. She finally came out with it. She said, "Let me see your driver's license," I told her I had none. "How about a social security card?" I told her I didn't have any. She said "everybody has one, how could you be a barber without one?"

She was really shaken. She said, "Listen, I wanted to take you home with me, but I am terrified of you. There is something really strange about you. Every stitch of your clothes is brand new, even shoes. You have no I.D. and you

look around you and watch everything like it was brand new, like the first time you ever saw it. I saw you get a pack of cigs, you didn't even know how to work the cig. machine. You have no girl friend, you can't drive, you don't even know when a woman is making a pass at you. You don't even know how to act around a woman, you seem afraid to touch me. You act like you're completely out of touch with reality. If I didn't know better I would think you were from another world."

Then she told me something I been told a lot of times by women since.

She said I was the right build, black wavy hair, dark complexion, nice teeth, and a sexy looking bastard with a cold brutal look. And that no woman would let me stray too far from home.

I thought for a minute and I said, "Honey, I am going to tell you something, and when I get through, if you want to you can get up and walk out. I am from another world. The world I come from, you never see a woman, unless your mother or sisters come to visit you. And no one shows you much kindness, just stabbings, murders, beatings. And you grow kind of cold and hard inside. And it will never leave overnight. And especially more so after you been there for eleven years for something you never done. And I am lonesome and lost, everything is new to me, I don't know what I am supposed to do about a lot of things, or how to go about it. I have been in prison for eleven years."

I got laid that night three times.

Next morning she took me over to the capitol building. I got a barber's license, new barber tools, and some new clothes. She showed me what to buy, how to dress and match colors, etc. I went to work for Stu, but I worked only when I felt like it. I had no rent or grocery bill, Blanche was

taking care of it. I called my sister, she came to Springfield, I gave her \$1,000, \$500 for her, and \$500 for my mother. I went to the bank and got five one-thousand dollar bills. I was holding them close. I had been in Springfield a month, I was making a C note a week as a barber.

Blanche drove us out on country roads, and I soon learned to drive. I could have got laid a dozen times a night in Blanches' joint, but she never let a conversation linger over five minutes with another broad. I got lucky and made out with a couple of waitresses who worked across the street from the barber shop. I would go up to their apartment for a couple of hours in the afternoon. I wanted to get to stealing, but not in Springfield, I was living there. Besides Blanche was acting crazy. She didn't want me out of her sight. It was where you been, what have you been doing? This was no good. I didn't have a key to her house, I had to come and go with her. If ever she reads this book, I want to tell her she was a nice woman, but I had a lot of things to do.



4



Basil "The Owl"

One day I walked into a public phone booth and cut out a piece of plastic. I called Blanche. She was at the bar. Then I called a cab, shot out to her house, slipped the lock on the door, threw my clothes in a couple of suit-cases, and caught the train to Chicago. I knew no one in the city but ex-cons I had done time with. I got a room at the Y.M.C.A.

Next day I picked up a paper, looked at the ads. They needed a barber at the Union Train Station. I knew where that was, so I walked over with my license, got the job. The only I.D. I had was a social security card. This new job was ok. I had a field day, a million broads must have worked in the building. I was making the rounds.

I moved out to 430 Diversey and looked up Basil "the Owl" Bankhart, an old con I had done time with in Stateville. He had come there from the Rock, Alcatraz. He used to tell me a lot of stories about big money and the rock. The Owl never lied, everything he told me was true. He was managing an apartment building on the North side, getting old and going straight. I was glad, he was really a nice guy. From him I got the connection to the fence, a fat greasy wop by the name of Nello, on the near north-west side.

I went home, told the broad Marge I was shacking with

she would have to leave, my wife was coming home. She didn't like it. She was a pretty nice kid. But I was getting ready to pay my debt to society. They had already collected what I didn't owe, and now I was going to get it back. The Owl didn't know what I was going to do, but he had told me. "If you got money kid don't ever worry about going to jail in Chicago. The whole fucking city is kinky."

I bought a ski-mask, gloves, and a good set of burglar tools. And then I went to work. I tore that fucking north side and suburbs to pieces. Every cop in the city was running around with his prick in his hand. Soon I was wearing two hundred dollar suits, driving a '62 Chrysler Imperial Le Baron. I wore a perfect 2 karat diamond and a Patek Philippe watch with a platinum band and case set with 48 diamonds. I never spent two nights in a row with the same broad. I knew my way around Chicago.

Sometimes I drove down to see my mother and give her money. She was worried about me. I told her I was working every day which was the truth. I was working as a barber (I'd changed over to the Fields Building) making three hundred a week.

I had kept in touch with Okie. I had money now, I figured now is the time to make a move to get Okie out. I knew he didn't want to break out. If he had, I would have already gotten a truckload of guns to him. I got a hold of a top-flight criminal lawyer and told him I don't care what it costs, check this guy out and you pull him, I don't care who you have to fix. I wanted this to be a surprise to Okie. Two weeks later the lawyer called me to come to his office. He said, "You must be a comedian. This guy died in prison a month ago." I never said a word, I got up and walked out.

I went into a bar somewhere in the Loop. I really wanted to cry, I felt like I had lost my second father. How come I lose every mother fucking thing that means anything

to me? I was drinking whiskey and beer for the first time in my life and not getting sick. Some bitch slid into a bar stool next to me and said, "Honey you look like you have problems."

I said, "Baby I really have, maybe you could do me a favor. How about if I bust this beer bottle and shove it right in your fucking face." I had never hit a woman in my life, but she didn't know this. I was in a real nasty mood. She left fast. I got so stoned I must have caught a cab home, I didn't even know where my car was.

I woke up the next morning sick. I made a pot of coffee, called the barber shop, said I wouldn't be in. I had never missed a day's work, but the boss gave me a bad time. I said listen go fuck yourself, I quit. I needed him like I needed two heads. What the hell was I doing working for someone else, I had enough money to buy ten barber shops. I looked up my last letter from Okie.

Dear Frank,

Nothing new ever happens around here. It's the same every day. The joint is full of stool pigeons and punks.

It's getting so you don't know who to say hello to around here. I say hello to a choice few, but never a word about you.

No I don't need money or anything, I always hurry to the cell to read the Chicago paper.

I always know kid when it's you.

So go slow and E.Z. and keep knocking them dead. I wouldn't want nothing to happen to you. Maybe you ought to think about getting married, I need some grandchildren's pictures to hang up around this dump, it looks dingy. You know I feel like I raised you. And you're doing a beautiful job on the bastards out there. I could never find the words to tell you how proud of you I am.

I always knew you would be a pro.

I am really proud.

Your pal, Okie

P.S. I know you're pretty busy, but drop a card a little more often.

I must have read the letter 10 times. I'd never forget what it said. I knew I had lost a friend. You don't find one too often. I drank the whole pot of coffee. My mind was running away with me. These dirty son-of-a-bitches gave Okie life over a cunt who wasn't worth 15 cents. I lay odds the fucking D.A. and judge who gave him life never even knew him.

Okie had told me the story only once, but I knew every word was true. "Kid you really have to be careful with broads, you can live with one twenty years and never know her. If you find a good one, hold her close to you. If you get a bad one keep moving. I had a bad one, but I loved her. I knew she was bad but when you're in love, kid, it's hard to move on. I was good to her, I figured she might change. You see kid, I couldn't let her know I was a cat burglar. Sometimes I would be gone two or three days, and I could never explain where I had really been. If you live in a small city you never want to steal there. Go on the road and then come home.

"I come home with a few dollars, \$30,000, we could have lived nice for a year. I come home she was in bed with a guy. I turned around, walked out, gave the fence the whole \$30,000 for a gun, all he had was a shot gun. When I went home the guy was gone. She didn't have enough sense to leave. When she seen the gun, she knew I was going to kill her. She tried to explain, she said it would never happen again. I blew her fucking head off.

"I went to the police station, without realizing I only had five thousand. After I woke up I called the fence, he

wouldn't give me back a dime. He knew the money was nothing, I could make that much in an hour. Five pieces kid, ain't quite enough to fix a murder beef, you need a few dollars more."

I put a match to the letter and watched it go up in smoke. I found my car, drove over to the Union Train Terminal, talked to Gene Arts, who owned the shop. He put me right to work. I was back in my playfield with the broads. I ran into Holly, a young redhead, 19 years old, who worked in Fred Harvey's gift shop. Her people had money, she lived in the southwest suburbs. I started going out with her, but I wasn't getting any action. I rented a room off her mother, they had a beautiful home on Center Ave. in Lyons, Ill. I had a nice room on the ground floor, and good alibi witnesses in case I ever got nailed. The only one way I could get in and out of the house without anyone seeing me was through my bedroom window.

When I walked up to a house, there was no such thing as not getting in. I had the tools to get by any lock in Chicago without making a sound. I always carried five one-thousand dollar bills and a little extra insurance, a loaded 38. Okie said never carry that gun, but I had no intentions of going to prison ever again. I was doing beautiful. Not a cop in the city knew me, I had not so much as taken a traffic pinch. The papers in the southwest suburbs started screaming about a cat burglar. I never even read the papers. How in the hell did they know who it was? No one had ever saw me, no one knew what I looked like, where I came from or shit. I always went in silently and left the same way. People never even knew anyone was in their house until they woke up. I was not working every night. Maybe once a month or once every couple of months.

I decided maybe I will get married, to Holly. I had a

beautiful 1 karat diamond and 5 nice rubies I had popped out of the mountings. No way they could be traced. I asked a friend if he knew any legit diamond setter's. He called Jack, a Jew from Rogers Park. Jack came over and took Holly's ring size and made her a nice diamond engagement ring, and ruby wedding ring. It was a different but beautiful set. I bought a house and fifteen thousand dollars worth of new furniture. We were married in the Lutheran Church on Ogden Ave. in Lyons. No one knew I had ever been in prison, or was a cat burglar.

It was a bad mistake me getting married. Holly was so goddamn dumb she couldn't boil water, and her mother was over to the house every day and bossing me and her. I finally got sick of it. Barbers never work on Wednesday in Chicago, Union rules. I called up a furniture dealer and he gave me two grand for fifteen thousand dollars worth of furniture, the son-of-a-bitch. I often thought of burning his joint down. The house, screw it, the bank could have it back. I'd buy another one. We never told her mother we were leaving. I know she was shocked the next day when she came over. We were in L.A.

I had a brother out there, what an asshole Wayne is. He is to be pitied. He is worse than any junkie can ever be. He is a habitual gambler, he lives like a bum. He would let his kids starve to play a horse, anything he could get his hands on went on the quarter horses at Los Alinitos race track, or Hollywood Park. I had his lights turned back on, the gas turned back on. His landlord, I had to grab the guy to keep him from kissing me. I paid him eight months back rent. I bought his wife and four kids new clothes and filled the house full of groceries. Wayne lived on North Figureo. I bought him a gas-station and garage on Ave. 60 & Monteray Rd. Wayne owed money to every son-of-a-bitch

in the state of California. I wasn't about to square those bills, and neither was he. Everytime he sold five dollars worth of gas, he was headed for the track, he couldn't call any bookie.

We stayed there three months. I really had to steal to keep Wayne going. I made two scores while I was out there, so I was not out one dime, I was money ahead. The cops in L.A. are supposed to be sharp, but no cat burglar will ever have a problem there. He could work there the rest of his life, never have a worry, and make a fortune. I was leaving, I didn't like the city, or the climate. I headed the big Imperial out route 66. We argued most of the way back. She hadn't liked California and the two nights I was out working, she thought I was out getting laid. I told her I'd I'll never tell where I was, but I wasn't getting laid. I wasn't going to tell her I was the cat burglar.

We got back to Chicago. I rented an apartment on Diversey, she called her mother, we had to go out and listen to her bullshit. She screams, "You have no house, no furniture, no job."

I said, "Lady, I can get a job anywhere in the city."

I didn't tell her I had money. Even Holly didn't know I had a safety deposit box. We went home. I told Holly I was going to see about a job. She didn't believe me. She was right.

I went over to see Nello the fence. The big fat bastard gloats over the diamonds, shows them to two guys in the kitchen drinking coffee. I called him into the next room. I said, "What in the fuck, are you crazy?"

Nello says, "Those guys are really stand-up people. They are two of the top burglars in the city, they do quite a bit of work for the outfit. That is Freddy Malchow, and Jimmy Evans."

He introduced them to me, I couldn't get out from under the move. They admitted to being burglars. I said I wasn't, I just bought a few stones. Then they went to naming other burglars: the Jackson Brothers, Billy and Danny, Frank Sander and Nick Rocco (I knew Nick from the joint). Nello went somewhere with my diamonds, we were drinking coffee and talking. I said Nello must really be making out if he was buying diamonds from all these guys. Freddy said that Nello wasn't buying anything from Nick and Frankie, they dropped their stuff out west. And that Nello was only buying for the outfit, for Jackie Cerone. I said who in the hell is Cerone? They said he was the big man on the South Side, Nello was only his errand boy.

I was really getting the information, but little did I know then how much it would harm me.

Nello came back, threw my money on the table, \$9,000. No discretion, nothing. I point blank told him, "Now just supposing these guys took a notion to rob me when I left here? I sure couldn't cry copper. And I couldn't let it slide. You would create a bad situation for me."

He said, "No one would ever dare rob anyone leaving out of here. Not even a policeman would rob you. If they did they would be in real trouble." I thought, is this bastard really that tough? Little did I know I would later have to stick a 38 in his mouth to find out. I shook hands and left.

I went home, Holly was screaming that I got laid. I said no, I borrowed some money from a friend. I showed her. Then she wants to know who I know that would loan me that much money. I said it didn't matter. I went to bed. Next day I went out, sold the Chrysler, bought a brand new 1964 Landau Thunderbird through the North Shore National Bank on Howard St. I looked through the want ads, found a barber shop for sale on Pulaski and Division. I bought it and went home. Holly was screaming I didn't get

a job. I said I bought a barber shop. She was satisfied. I said call your girlfriend Irene, and have her over for dinner. Make sure she brings Louie (Louie was a barber).

When they came over I asked Louie if he wanted to work for me. He was full of questions. Where, how much? I told him Division and Pulaski, the place has a nice apartment in the back. You will be working for yourself. Give me \$10.00 a day, you pay the rent, light bill, gas, and water. He was paying \$150.00 rent where he was living. The rent on the shop was \$200.00 He took the deal, he was making out like a burglar. When he left Holly started again. "Where are you going to work?" I said I was going to buy another joint. "Where are you getting all this money?" I lied, said I only paid a grand for the place. I really hated this goddamn lying.

I went over the first morning Louie was working. It felt pretty good to be the boss. The guy I bought the joint from came out of the back, said he would move out that week. He explained I had to get a city license. This was a problem. I am an ex-con, I sure don't want it kicked around Chicago. I drove over to Nello's

Mistake No. 1. I had to tell him I bought a barber shop, and where at, and did he know anyone at City Hall? No, but he could find out. I had to give him my right name. He made a phone call, and whoever it was wanted to know how to spell my name, my shop address and home address. I was told to see a guy in the License Dept. I went straight down, and when I asked for the guy, a nice looking Italian came forth. I had to sign a form. My license was already made out, he handed it to me. I said what is the charge? He said you be the doctor. I handed him a C note. The license only cost ten dollars legit, but I'd rather pay the extra \$90 and not answer any questions.

I started to walk out, he called me back. He said he

was in the market for a nice full length mink. I looked at him, I said my wife don't even own one, I am a barber not a furrier. When I walked out I was really smoking. I thought that fat wop son-of-a-bitch Nello, whoever he talked to on the other end of that phone, he must have told him I was a jewel thief. And he in turn had told the guy that a jewel thief would be in for a barber's license.

I drove straight back to Nello's. I told him, man, please don't kick my name around, or I have to take my business elsewhere. I got introduced to another burglar, Billy Jackson. Billy was around 35, 5 ft. 7 in. tall, black hair, dark, nice personality. I knew the kid was sharp. He said he had been working Florida, and he looked it. He was expensively dressed, and had a nice tan. Nello stuck his two cents in. He said Billy was the best burglar in the country, and he knew every wealthy neighborhood in the country.

We walked out together, Billy drove off in a new white Caddy convertible with Florida license plates. I thought screw it, I am buying a new Caddy convertible. I went to North Shore National Bank, sold the Thunderbird and bought a brand new Caddy. I loafed around for a couple of weeks, to see how Louie was doing with the new shop. He was satisfied. The following week, I bought another shop at 4248 W. North Ave. in the Lyons Hotel. It was really a good shop. Two barbers couldn't handle the business.

I was working myself, and I was one of the best and fastest barbers in the city. Cutting hair in the joint every day, one head right after the other, day in and out, you get more experience in one year than the average barber gets in a life time. We had most of the business from the Schwin bicycle factory, Motorola, Howard Foundry, Helene Curtis, and several other big factories in the neighborhood. Plus all the jewel thieves were coming in for haircuts, and behind

them the coppers started coming. These scummy bastards were robbing every thief on the streets and they actually wanted free hair-cuts. They had to pay at my shop.

5



Fat Nello

I didn't want to steal in Chicago, so I decided to take a ride up to Cleveland and Cincinnati and look around. I put my attache case and a suitcase in the car. Holly raised hell. I told her business was taking me to Kansas City for a few days, it couldn't be helped.

As I was pulling in on the outskirts of Cleveland I saw a new Fleetwood Caddy I thought was Danny's parked at a Howard Johnson's. I knew Danny was a burglar and a very good one. I thought maybe I better go back and check and make sure, I don't want to work any neighborhood where Danny has just worked. Not that I was afraid of the cops. There wouldn't be anything left. No police force in the country is equipped to catch a cat burglar.

I walked in the restaurant, it was Danny. I sat down. Danny asked what I was doing. I said I was just going back to Chicago. He asked me if I had been working. I said no, how about you. He had been tearing up Indian Hills, and Shaker Heights, in Cincinnati and Cleveland. (Those are the really wealthy neighborhoods in the two cities.) He said also he had been killing them in Grosse Pointe, Michigan (an exclusive suburb of Detroit, nothing but millionaires).

I asked Danny how is their police department and patrols in the neighborhood? He laughed so much he

almost fell out of the booth. I always figured Danny wasn't quite all there. Finally he got control of himself. He had an attache case setting next to him on the booth, he looked around and opened it. It was full of money. There must have been at least a hundred thousand in the case. Danny said all those cops are doing is drawing a check and praying no other cat burglars came in the neighborhood.

Let me take time out to tell you about Danny. I never worked with Danny. But this is from his brother Freddy, Jimmy, Billy, and other burglars who know him. First off, Danny is really a loner, and second, he has a reputation for being a ripper, raping broads in the homes. No good cat burglar wants any part of that and will refuse to stand for it, or work with anyone who does. Danny has squinty eyes, and a funny voice. Make no mistake he is a top-flight cat burglar, with plenty of nerve, maybe too much. I don't think Danny steals for money, he just loves to steal. And he hates anything in a uniform. He doesn't trust anyone. No one, not even his brother, knows where Danny lives. He will park his car 10-20 blocks from where he really lives. Go over back fences and through back yards to get to his house. He always carries large sums of money, forty to fifty thousand. Danny will rob a whole block at one time. He will go right down the line. He will rob a house trailer if one is setting there. He will tell a cop, or anyone who asks him, that he is a burglar and a good one too. I am pretty sure he has never been busted for a burglary. I think he has taken a few pinches for burglary tools, but the dumbest cop in the world can get lucky and make that pinch.

Danny grabbed the check and we walked out the door. I headed back toward Chicago, but I made a re-route and walked somewhere else that night. I made two scores right next door to each other. It paid me well for my time and expenses.

The jewelry I had I popped out of the mounting. When I got back to Chicago, Holly just knew I had gotten laid. I took the stones downtown and told a guy I wanted them appraised, for insurance purposes. They were appraised for twenty-eight thousand dollars. I paid the guy and walked out. I am sure that wasn't a very bright move. In case of a pinch I couldn't prove where I got them, but by the same token neither could the cops.

I took the diamonds over to Nello's, said I'd be back later on to get my money. When I come back Nello gave me four grand. I threw it back at him. I said, "I don't want that, you're going to have to do better than that."

Nello said, "It's too late, I have already sold them."

I said "Man this is not even a third."

"Well I kept a grand for my troubles."

"You fat mother-fucker your troubles are just starting if you don't get my diamonds back."

Nello said, "You fool around here you will wind up in a trunk."

I put a 38 right up against his eye. I said, "Open your mouth." I put the barrel in his mouth. I said, "You fat bastard, I go out and rob somebody, and you scared son-of-a-bitch, I get here you want to rob me. If you need money that bad, be a burglar. Those diamonds are worth twenty-eight grand."

I took \$300 out of Nello's pocket, his watch, cig lighter, took \$400 from his wife, and made her give me her wedding and engagement rings. I said, "If you want this shit back just come over to the shop with my diamonds, tomorrow."

The next day at the shop, around 10 o'clock, I had a couple of visitors. I didn't know who they were right then, but I damn sure could see they didn't need hair-cuts. They called me in the back-room and introduced themselves:

Jackie Cerone and Joe Gags, two top Mafia hoodlums in Chicago.

They was point-blank to the issue. I had a problem and they were not there to play games. I said every story has two sides, let's go directly to Nello. That was agreeable with them. We drove over to Nello's, at the kitchen table I told my story. I said, "I have brought this man quite a few jewels. I always figured I was getting screwed, but this time I knew I was." Joe Gags asked how much money I received. I told him. Joe started punching and kicking Nello all over the house. He called him so many names, and threwed so many threats at him, I thought he might kill him right there. I wanted no part of a murder beef. Nello had to cough up the rest of my money. I had to give back Nello's wife's rings. They insisted we go have lunch on them.

Joe done most of the talking. He said, "You are a good burglar. You must be good, you been bringing in jewels quite awhile now. How many times you been pinched?"

I said, "I never been pinched. No cops knew anything about me, not even other burglars, until Nello sent them around."

Joe asked did I have a record, I said yes. He said, "From now on you bring your jewels directly to me. I can do you a lot of good. There is nothing anywhere in the country that can't be fixed. You are not even going to worry about going back to the joint. We like you, and when we like people, we always see that they have a chance to make money for themselves." He explained the deal. I had a business in the neighborhood, no one knew anything about me. He had a lot of business in the area. So guys would be coming in and giving me envelopes. I was to open them, take half the money, and bring the rest to a bar or a cleaners on Chicago Ave. and give it to him or Willie

Messino. If I couldn't find them, I was to take it down on North Ave. to the restaurant next to the funeral home and ask for Frankie. If anyone needed money, just call one of them, and they would give me the money. The guy had to pay ten dollars interest on every hundred he got. And never worry about the guy paying it back. They always got paid. If the cops or anyone ever did come around, just get ahold of him.

He took me over on North Ave. where I met Frankie. Over on Chicago Ave. I met Willie Messino. (I never liked him from the minute I saw him. He is a short dago, about 50 years old. He was sitting out in front of the bar in a new Mustang with his blond whore. And he had a real big mouth.) If I needed money to loan I was to get ahold of any of the three. Frank N. had the only other shop in the area, a junk barber shop at North Ave and Grand. He was backing for Willie, and also picking up envelopes.

They also introduced me to a burglar named John. I recall the first time I ever met him. I always come over to the barber shop about 8:30 and opened up at 9. When I pulled up that morning there was a new Lincoln Continental with California plates parked in front of the shop. There was two guys and a broad in the car. I recognized Freddy. They got out and followed me in, Freddy was carrying an attache case. Freddy said, "Take a look at this." We went into the back room. He opened the case, dumped everything out on the back counter, he really had a beautiful score. \$250,000 worth of jewelry. Freddy said, "We just got this out of Indian Hills in Cleveland, from a doctor and his wife. I know you won't believe this but every window and door in the house was open, we just walked in." (When the doctor reads this he will know it's true.)

I said, "How did you know it was there?" He said,

“The outfit always gives me my score, I know where I am going and what I am getting. It was a beautiful score, no problems whatsoever. We took one of their cars and shoved it out to the airport, so the cops would think we left on the plane. Then I called my wife and she left the motel and picked us up.”

I said to John, “Man you must be crazy to mix your wife up in this.” John said, “The cops never look twice if you have a couple of women in the car. It looks bad for two or three guys to be in a car late at night.”

A year later John got killed in Florida. Him and Price were working on a burglary in the Miami Area. He was working on a door to get in. He made no noise, the people in the house were sleeping. They had cut the phone wires. But the people next door looked out the window and saw them. They tried to call the neighbors, their phone was dead. So they called the police. When the police came in John and Price run. Price was shot in the leg, but made it back to Chicago. John fell over a cliff and knocked his brains out on the rocks below. They fished him out, but he died three days later of a brain concussion. It took the Miami police about a week to find out who John was, he carried no I.D. Price told us what happened.



6



Strip Joints, Whore Houses, And Car Lots

I was still living on Diversey, but I was moving out. Frankie Sander was working at a beauty parlor right by my house. When the wealthy broads came in Frankie would park their cars. A lot of them left their house keys and apartment keys on the key ring. Frankie would go have all their keys duplicated and later on him and Nick Rocco would go invade the homes and torture the people. I wanted no part of that shit, the papers were screaming about the torture gang. I knew it was just a matter of time till the cops started figuring out all these broads went to the same beauty parlor. I didn't even want to live in the same area. I moved out to Rogers Park, two blocks from the lake, in a cheap apartment, \$400 a month. Nick Rocco and his crew had Chicago so stirred up you had to be crazy to work. They got busted about six months after I moved. I am surprised they lasted that long. They must have really been paying off the cops. Nick got 199 years. I think Frankie got 150 years, and a couple of other guys got an ass load of time.

I was playing it smart and not working on any scores. I had both businesses going good, and the loan sharking was bringing in money. I started looking for another business. I started buying cars and shaving them at a lot on Grand and a few down on Cicero Ave. That gave me an excuse to stay out a little at night, and Holly wasn't doing any complaining. I usually was home every night by 10 o'clock.

Then a guy dropped by the car lot around six, he had a '62 or '63 caddy he needed a set of tires for. I told him come with me out to the house, I have a brand new set of Vogue tires in my basement, you can have them. We drove out in my car. I opened the door and went in. Holly was so occupied she never heard the door open. She was in bed with some guy. Son-of-a-bitch I had walked into exactly the same deal Okie had. The only difference was I wasn't going to kill anyone. I told him, "You son-of-a-bitch I hope you can afford the rent, you got yourself a broad." The only thing that burned me was my one-year old daughter April was in her crib in the same room. I questioned the guy, he was a hillbilly, didn't have two nickels to rub together. I had no problem getting any answers to my questions. I had a 38 looking in his mug. I laid it on the line very clearly. I said to Holly, "You can do as you please. I am taking April, I'll raise her, she has no business with you. There will be no alimony, and if you make any attempt to get April through any court proceedings, they will find you in the lake."

I dressed April and took her to my sister's in Indiana. It was a heartbreaker to have to leave her. She had never been away from me, and she loved her father. No matter what time or when I came in that house, she would wake up, and I spent a lot of time with her.

When I came back from Indiana, Holly was gone. I changed the locks on the door. The guy walked off and left her in a hotel room on Clark St. three days later. Some other guy picked her up and threw her out after a week. She called the shop and wanted to know if she could come over. I said, "I don't own Chicago, I am working on it though." She came over, she had no place to go. I took her out to lunch and hard-ass laid it on the line. I wanted April home, I loved her and missed her, and it was killing me

running back and forth to Indiana every night. I needed a baby sitter, she could have the job. But I was not paying four hundred a month for a whore house. I said "If you're going to turn tricks, run them up on Clark St. and get paid." I had never once since we've been married been out with another broad, but there were plenty from then on.

She didn't like that arrangement. But she didn't have much choice in the matter, she would never have gotten her foot in the door if it were possible for me to take care of April. I didn't know any broads at that precise moment, but a month later I had four sharp broads hustling right out of the barber shop. I went and bought a new G.T.O. so the whores would have transportation. I had Danny, Joyce, Alice, and Mary, all \$20 hookers. The phone was staying pretty busy, and the G.T.O. was getting miles on it. I went home when I got ready. I always made sure Holly had money for herself and the baby, but if she was getting any sex it sure wasn't from me. She figured out a way to get me home when she needed me. She would call up and say April was sick. She knew that would bring me. The whore Alice had her husband's credit card. I had her run it through the Sears store for over \$4,000 worth of merchandise and then I sold it for a thousand. I took her down to my lawyer's office, threw him four hundred and got her a divorce. I talked to the lawyer about a used car lot. He said I had a record, I had to put it in my wife's name. I had him incorporate H & H Auto Sales at 1735 North Cicero. I had Holly sign for the dealer's plate and get a notary seal.

I called my brother in L.A. and told him about the deal. I figured if he came to Chicago maybe he would quit gambling. I sent him money. Then I opened a body and fender shop and garage, and a Sinclair gas station.

I owned every car on the lot with a clear title, about 100

cars. I bought from the street, then auctioned to other dealers. I had no complaints with the re-possessed cars I was buying from North Shore National Bank. Like I bought a 2 year old car, a 1963 Ford Convertible for \$100. I screwed Johnson Ford out of a few cars, Elmwood Park Ford out of about twenty. And a big garage in Evanston that was storing cars for North Shore National Bank, I screwed them out of almost hundred cars. Now I had two big car lots.

Donna took a pinch. The vice and narcotic squad from the 14th district set her up on my phone, they pinched her when she walked outside. I took my first pinch in Chicago, for a house of ill repute. I couldn't fix the beef right then, there were too many people in the shop. I had to go over to the 14th district. I was out two seconds later on bond. I tried to pull Donna, but she had to go down to 11th and State. I couldn't pull her out until next morning unless I wanted to really drop a bundle that night. I dropped a hundred and got up to women's lock-up to see her, told her don't worry I'd have her out first thing in the morning. I showed in court the next morning when Donna's case came up. The lawyer posted bond. She was charged with prostitution, me with a house of ill repute.

When I was over to her apartment that night, the two coppers who pinched her called. They wanted to make it with her. I whispered in her ear, "Keep them talking, tell them to call you tomorrow night, you don't feel like nothing tonight." She hung up. I knew I could fix this beef but I wasn't going to take any chances. I called a guy who was an electrical engineer. Red was a genius with electronics. (I met him when he came in the shop for a hair-cut. He liked to hang out with hoodlums, and there were plenty in and out of my shop.) I asked him if he could tap a phone. He

said it was no problem. I brought him up to Donna's and he put the tap on. When they called the next night, I had her talk to both of them right on the phone. O.K., I had them one way or the other.

I met the two cops at the Terminal restaurant. I said, "Let's square this beef. Either you can take the money, or a lawyer gets it, I don't really care which way it goes." They said I had a sheet. I asked what a prison record had to do with this bullshit beef. They wanted \$1,000, I said I'd give them \$500. They took it. I put the tapes away just in case and told Donna everything was O.K., the case was fixed.

Now she wanted me to live with her. I said bullshit, I was not living with her or any other broad. She got pissed and blew the bond. The case was Nolle Processed and a warrant put out for her. I went back and fired all the whores. That just wasn't my bag.

I started shacking with a girl named Sherry off and on, but I always went home to make sure April was all right and they had plenty of money. Sherry was a jealous bitch, she shoved an icepick in my heart. I had to go to the doctor's office, he had to call the police. I told him I fell on a pair of shears. He said if that's what happened, that's what I have to report. I liked the guy, we became friends.

The new Caddies were just coming out. I went and bought an new convertible. I had exactly 300 miles on it when a goofy ass Puerto Rican, who should have still been riding a donkey, wiped out the whole right side. He did not have a dime's worth of insurance. My insurance company didn't want to pay up. I told the guy at my body and fender shop to total it. I didn't want the car. But he had to be a wise bastard and fix it, so I sent a couple of thieves to strip it. Then I bought another new Caddy convertible.

I figured I needed another business. I was shacking off

and on with a go-go broad named Joyce Bright. So I bought a big joint on Armitage and Central Park, the Rock A-Go-Go, remodeled the place, and started booking in top-flight entertainment. All the thieves, burglars, and coppers were hanging out in the joint. I had a 4 o'clock license, an entertainment license, and no problems from the 14th. The joint was packed every night, you couldn't turn around. I had plenty of business going now. Two barber shops, two car-lots, a gas station, a body and fender shop and garage, and a night club.

But I wasn't getting no sleep, I was eating a bottle of bennies a week, and hardly any food. That's when I met the woman of all women, the girl who fought and fought, me and everybody else, till she finally got me and my whole life straightened out. I think she loved me from the minute she saw me. And she wouldn't give up, and her love and loyalty has never wavered until this day. She was from Germany, she didn't speak too good an English, she didn't have nothing. She lived across the street from the Rock A-Go-Go.

She would cook food and bring it over and argue with me until I ate it. I said, "Listen you want to go out with me?"

She said, "Yes, but first I must tell my boyfriend."

I said, "What are you crazy, tell him nothing."

She said, "No I must. I would never cheat on anyone. And I must be true to myself."

I said, "O.K. honey do it your way. How about working for me. I pay you a hundred a week and you come over and let the whiskey and beer delivery man in."

I gave her a key to the joint, and when that joint was opened at 6 o'clock it was spotless. I had the cleanest and fullest joint in Chicago. And Josie is a hard-working girl.

When she wants something, she never gives up. She wanted me, even when I had a million broads. She finally got me away from every one of them and stopped me from stealing. And I have no regrets.

7



The Hook Up

A couple nights later I done a very foolish thing. As I said I wasn't sleeping or eating, I was going on bennies. I didn't need money. I don't know why, I decided to work.

When I left the Rock A-Go-Go it was snowing lightly. I drove over to the lot, parked my car, took one off the lot and went out to the suburbs to work. I parked, walked to the house, picked the lock and went in. I never cut phone wires or anything.

Someone in that house must have been awake and called the minute I walked out.

I was easing my way back to the car when all of a sudden squads were coming in from all directions blocking off streets. I figured screw this. I ran across the street, they saw me, I kept going when they hollered stop. They shot two or three times, but you have to be a damn good shot to hit a black moving target on a black night. They were on the radios, and they were getting out of their cars for the chase. If I could get across the bridge I would be all right, but they were tracking me in the snow. I wasn't going to throw the jewelry until I had to. I threw the gun. Those pills were killing my wind. I couldn't get far enough ahead to hide the jewelry. If I could get rid of that, the best they could do was nail me on a trespassing rap. I got down to the bridge. I had no choice, I had to go across, I couldn't turn back.

I get about half-way across the bridge, and a squad is coming toward me. Either way I go I am trapped. The bridge isn't very high, but it is the filthy Des Plaines River. I go over the side.

Then nothing happened. I still had the jewelry, the water was not cold as I thought it would be, no one shot at me. I got down stream, and out of the water. I damn near froze to death when I came out, but I wasn't about to go to the car, I figured it was staked out. I don't know to this day how I made it home.

When I got to Rogers Park, it was near breaking daylight. Holly let me in the house. My clothes were frozen, when I got them off I was blue. She ran a tub-full of cold water and I got in. I took the sock full of jewelry, laid it in the toilet bowl, and told her if anyone rings that doorbell, or kicks in the door, don't pay any attention to anything, just flush the toilet so that sock will go down. No one came around, but that is when Holly found out I was a jewel thief.

I finally got thawed out, put the wet clothes in the incinerator, took all the stones out of the mountings, heaved the mountings in the lake. I reported the car stolen at the 14th.

A couple of months later I went out to a Chrysler Plymouth dealer. He said, "Listen I got a guy who wants to meet you. I have to call him or I wind up in a lot of trouble."

I said, "Who is it?"

He said, "He is really good people, with big connections, he can really do you a lot of good."

"Why does he want to meet me?"

He said, "Do you realize you are the only burglar in the area who is not known and has never been pinched? How

long can this last? Too many people are finding this out. Don't worry, these are some of the most powerful people in Chicago. Believe me nothing can happen to you anywhere with these people in your corner."

A big fat Jew weighing close to 300 lbs. walked in. I was introduced to him, we'll call him Benny Stern. He told me he had a furrier's on State Street. I breathed easier, I told him furs were out of my line, I stole only jewels. Benny says let's talk in his car. We go out to his car, a brand new Caddy Fleetwood with the phone and the works. He says, "I am going to introduce you to one of the most powerful men in Chicago, a man who can put you in touch with some of the biggest jewel scores anywhere in the country. And protect you in any state you work."

I said, "Who is he?"

"Leo Rugendorf, 'Milwaukee' Phil Alderisio's partner. Do you know them?"

I had only saw their names in the paper.

Leo was out on an appeal bond. A new Ford agency had been bankrupted, all the cars had disappeared, and every hoodlum in Chicago had a new car for a grand or whatever he could afford to pay. Phil was known as the high lord and executioner in several gangland killings in Chicago.

I met Benny again next morning at a delicatessen. It was there he introduced me to Leo Rugendorf. Leo was a small Jew, 5-5, with bad eyes, about 55 years old. One look at this guy you knew he was a dangerous son-of-a-bitch. This guy was a killer and you didn't have to look twice to know it.

He was direct to the point. He said, "Word has come to me you are a top-flight burglar. If you are, we can make you a millionaire in six months. We can show you where the

jewels are, what is there and what to look for. And when we tell you there's jewels in the house we know they are there. Let's drive over to my house."

We drove over to Chase Ave. in Lincolnwood. He owned at least a \$70,000 home and there was two new Oldsmobiles parked in the yard. He invited me in the house, introduced me to his wife, she poured coffee. Leo made a phone call, I didn't know who he was talking to. I heard him say, "I have the guy right here in the house, we will be right out within the next hour." We got a '59 Chevy, he asked me to drive. I said, "Why do you drive this piece of shit?" He said the cops pay no attention to that car, so he didn't get stopped as often. (The same thing Okie told me.)

We drove out to Riverside, to at least a \$100,000 home. The inside was like a governor's mansion. I was introduced to Phil, and then to his wife Molly. She got lost.

Phil wasted no time getting down to business. He said, "I'll line up the scores for you. You worry about nothing. If you do take a pinch, there will be a bondsman and a lawyer there. And you will never have to work in a city or a state where I don't have a connection."

I said, "What if I work with a partner?"

He said, "We take care of you, he is strictly on his own. Don't ever let anyone know where you are getting the scores, not even a partner. That way no one can ever beef, or bring the cops directly to us. And if you ever do, they will find pieces of you and your wife all over Chicago. Or wherever we catch you. If you work with a partner he is your responsibility. If he beefs on you, that is your own problem. He is never supposed to know anything about us. Drop the jewels off to Leo unless he tells you to see me. Otherwise stay as far away from here as you can get. Call me if it's an emergency, and you can't reach Leo."

I said, "I know a few other good burglars."

Phil said, "I don't care who you know. I don't want to meet anyone. If I want to meet them I'll send for them. If I give you a score I don't care how you get it. If you want to you can send one of them to get the score. But make sure you get the jewelry from them. There will be no hassle over the price. There are expenses included here you don't have. We need money to get the scores. And don't try holding out a piece or two. We know what is there. If anybody holds out anything, I promise you they will never do it a second time. Now is there anything you don't understand? If there is, now is the time to get the answers, not later."

I said I had only one question. "Who finances the trips? Sometimes you blow a grand a week on the road."

He said, "Don't worry about that, whatever you need see Leo. Money, guns, cars, Leo is your father from here on out. But never bring anyone with you when you get guns, money, cars, or whatever it is."

When we were walking out, I thought that is one cold-hearted son-of-a-bitch. I asked Leo if Phil was really that powerful. Leo said, "If there is any doubt in your mind, test him. But when you do, you better be for real. He is not playing any games."

I dropped Leo off in front of his house in Lincolnwood. He wrote down his number and Phil's for me and took three or four numbers where I could be reached. He told me to memorize the numbers and get rid of them. I drove back to the Rock-A-Go-Go.

Frankie came in raising all kinds of hell. There were two envelopes short, two weeks in a row, both were \$500 loans. He said since I had made both loans with their money, I was responsible. I said that was not the deal that was set up when it was made. He said screw the deals that

were made, I had to come up with the money or else. And I knew what the or else meant. I thought do I need this god damn aggravation? I said O.K., I'd pay the grand, he'd collect his own envelopes. He said that was no good, I had to pay and keep collecting.

I figured I'd go see Leo and see just how strong he was.

I called and went out to Leo's house. I told him the story, he said to screw Frankie, and pay nothing. He made three phone calls from the next room, to who or what about I don't know. Then he said we'd go see Frankie.

I said, "Do you know where he is?"

Leo said, "I know where he will be when we get there."

I drove Leo over on North Avenue to the restaurant in my Caddy. Leo said to go in there and tell Frankie to come out. I went in. He was there, he was burning, but he didn't say shit. I told him he had a visitor. He must have knew who it was.

Leo point-blank told Frankie, he said, "This guy don't pick up no more envelopes, and he don't owe you a dime. He is with us!"

Frankie was going to explain, but Leo said, "There is nothing to explain, you have been told."

Frankie looked at me and said, "You'll pay for this."

Leo told him, "If he does you are going to be real real sorry. Now you can apologize." He apologized, and we left.

I was really impressed. How in the hell can a little old man like this frighten two people so badly and never raise his voice, or use one word of profanity? While I was taking him home Leo told me stay away from those people. Don't get involved anymore. I went back over to the go-go joint.

Billy was there, also Freddy, Jimmy, and Barry. I told them what happened. They said Frankie wouldn't be around anymore. Billy had just come back from Canada.

he had been working up there. He was really making out around Montreal and Quebec. He said they didn't know what to do with a cat burglar up there. I don't know how in the hell it all got started, but we all decided to go to Canada. Me, Jimmy, Billy, Freddy, Danny, and Barry. I told the bartender to run the joint, Josie to pick up the money. I went out to the house, gave Holly and April a grand, packed some clothes. I went back over to the joint and we all met.

Donnie was taking his broad, Jimmy and Barry were going to ride together. We left Chicago in five cars, all new Cadillacs, Lincolns, and Chryslers. Everyone was following Billy. When we got outside Chicago, Billy pulled over at a restaurant. We all went in. We matched coins to see who would carry the guns and burglar tools. Freddy lost, we put all the attache cases in his car. There is no sense in everyone taking a pinch if something goes wrong, and you're not going to get any more time for one tool than for a dozen, if anything happens.

We pulled into Montreal. Billy and Jimmy knew this old woman who owned a motel with cabins, she had ten cabins and we rented them all. We put all the attache cases in the end-cabin in case of a bust. My tools and case were always wiped down, gun and all, so if I ever had to throw them, the cops could never come up with my prints.

After I rested up Billy and I took a ride through the area where the mansions were. There were some really beautiful homes, especially on one street named Kings Row. The only thing was if you got a rumble in there, you had to be careful not to get drove back toward the water. I didn't like the neighborhood. The second night we all went out partying. I didn't like this either, someone might be able to identify we had been in the city.

I made out with some broad, I checked into a hotel, I didn't want to take her to where I was staying. When I came back to the cabin next morning about 9:30, I noticed all our cars, every one except Billy's, had Illinois plates and a Chicago sticker on the windshield. I thought man oh man any cop who notices all those cars are from the same place might just investigate on general principles. I backed out and parked my car about eight blocks away. It wasn't going to hurt me to walk a little. When everyone got up they missed my car. I told them I was going to keep it out of there.

Danny and his goofy bitch had been drinking and fighting all day, everyone was pissed. I just didn't like the idea of that broad being there. I wasn't too anxious to go to work. Everyone went out, I stayed home.

About four in the morning, I hear a lot of cars and noise, I get up and look out the window. The god damn place is full of cops and squads. I get dressed in a hurry. Someone pounds on the door, yells, "Open the door in the name of the Queen, this is the Royal Mounted Police." I figured screw you junior kick it in. I grab the rest of my clothes and suitcase, and go out the back-window. Good thing there was no screen on the window. I make it to my car and head for Illinois.

They all showed up in Chicago two weeks later, all but Barry, he owed the Feds 6 months parole so he got violated for being out of the country. Seems Dannie had smacked hell out of his broad downtown or shot at her or something. To be truthful I don't believe anyone really knows what went down. Everyone gets pinched. The police find the guns and tools. They make bond, (all but Barry), go to court, and wind up getting escorted out of Canada and told they better not return. I had to be a damn fool to ever get mixed up in anything like that.

Leo called for me to come over. He had a score in Florida, at least \$70,000 or more, I don't recall all the pieces. I told him I needed burglar tools and guns, money for the road, and a car. I didn't want to use my Caddy in the score. It was no problem, he gave me \$2,500, said to rent a car, get two 45's and a 38, and buy what tools I need. I said renting a car was bad business. He said they didn't even know if I was worth a car yet, they'd see how I managed the score. He gave me the address and said there was five people in the house. I wondered how he knew all this, he hadn't been out of Chicago.

I decided to take Jimmy with me. I had Joyce rent a car. Jimmy took Linda, I took Holly, I thought we might as well make a vacation out of it. When we was about two hundred miles out of Chicago I realized I had left my driver's license at home. Jimmy had his, I wasn't going back. We would just be careful. We went by way of New Orleans and on into Florida. We got a motel seventy miles from the score. Jimmy and I drove through the neighborhood and found the address, and we set up parking for about six miles away. We went back that night.

I unlocked the doors. I told Jimmy to just watch outside, I'd see if I could find the jewelry. I went in, found most of the jewelry, it took about an hour. I had everything but the wedding ring, and I was not going to wake the woman up for that. We drove back to the motel, picked up the women, and moved on another 100 miles to another motel. There we split up the jewelry between Holly and Linda, and they each had a gun in their purse.

When we left I was driving. I went through an amber light, and son-of-a-bitch if a squad didn't pull me over at the next light. I had no driver's license. I told the girls get ready to heave the guns and jewelry, I was going to run for it as soon as he stepped out of the car. I told the cop a god

damn car cut right in front of me. He said he wanted to see my driver's license. I said I didn't have one. He said I would have to come to the station. I said I'd follow him. The bastard said, "Oh no, you can't drive, you have no license. Get in the car with my partner and I'll drive these people down to the station." I thought for sure we was busted for guns and possession of stolen jewelry.

We got to the station, they put Jimmy and me in a cell, and Holly and Linda were waiting by the desk. When they saw the registration to the car they had a million questions. I gave them the answers and told them I owned several businesses in Chicago. They called Joyce about the car, she said she knew I had the car but not in Florida. She was really pissed when she found out I was with my wife. The car was cleared, the business was cleared.

Some captain said he'd make us a deal. If they searched that car and if there was nothing in it we could go. I said O.K. I knew the car was clean. But if they ever searched those women we were really screwed. I said, "I am not saying anyone here is dishonest, but if you don't mind I'd like to watch you search the car. I'd be disappointed if you came in with something that was not there." He said, "I understand they do things like that in Chicago. We don't work like that down here." After he searched the car he said we could go.

When Holly and Linda got in the car, they were both ready to pass out. The minute we got out of the city limits we caught the first side road and got into Alabama. We heard a news flash. Florida police had just released two Chicago men after a thorough search and later found out they both had records, and could be possible suspects in a \$70,000 dollar jewel theft. I said, "Jimmy the first town or city you come to, go by a body and fender shop and park about 8 blocks away. I'll go back and get Alabama plates

off a wreck for this car." We got the plates, threw away the guns, and put Holly and Linda on a plane in Mobile. Jimmy and I kept driving.

We got into Tennessee, I got plates off another wrecked car. We were the safest drivers on the road, we were not violating any traffic laws. When we got out of Tennessee, I put the Illinois plates back on. We got back O.K. It was a hell of a trip but really worth it. I had really learned a lesson in Florida, and I damn sure corrected my mistakes. I was never again going on a score in a car under my name or driver's license, or in a rented car.

When I gave Leo the jewelry I asked if he had a connection for driver's licenses so I could register them under my exact description. He said it was no problem. We went out to Laramie Ave. Motor Vehicle, and he introduced me to a guy there. I told him what I wanted. He asked what address I wanted the licenses mailed to, and what names I wanted them under? I gave him Paul Wright, Gene Regan, Dan Wilkey, Jeff La Vern, Frank Henry, and five different addresses. Then he said to go out on the street, find five parked cars, and bring him their license numbers. He would say I took the test in those cars. I signed five different times, he sent in one a week. I tried to give him some money, but he said no, but I could bring him a nice full length mink sometime for his wife. I told him I didn't like to take anything I had to put in my trunk, but I'd get him the coat.

Next I got a car. I went over to my lot, sold a '59 Pontiac to Jeff La Vern, made out the papers and title transfers, and sent them off to Springfield. When they came back, Jeff La Vern's driver's license and car would be in order. If I ever had to ditch them they could look all they wanted for Jeff La Vern, I would never be him.

I took the Pontiac down on South State St. and had it

built over from the ground up. Everything was brand new, even the interior. The only thing that was the same was the body. When they got through with it, Jimmy and I took it out to road-test it. It ran so fast it ran sideways. You could never open it up. We put it in a garage in Skokie. We never ever drove it on the streets. It looked like a piece of shit, but it was ready. We used the car damn near a year.

Being a burglar for the outfit was a lot different. You didn't work when you wanted to, you worked when they was ready. You could go out on your own if you wanted but the best burglar in the world can't work every night and something not go wrong. I was not working every night, but at least once and sometimes twice a week. I have committed so god damn many burglaries I couldn't remember them all if my life depended on it. So from here on, I'll tell only the ones where something unusual happened. This book would be a million pages if I just listed burglaries.

Billy had a beef going in California, not a burglary, a conspiracy charge he got popped on a tapped phone. I said "Can't you fix the beef?" Billy said, "It's not the money, it's the heat. I have never been busted as a burglar, and the feds and everyone are looking over the judge's shoulder to make sure I get at least a nickel (five years) not for anything I done, but what they think I done." He got the five years too.

I called Red to have all my phones checked out, the joint, the barber shops, car lot, and the house. I had no taps. Red and I cut into the phone wires in the basement where I lived on Ashland and Greenleaf in a new apartment building, just to see if anyone in the building was reporting my comings and goings. No one was, but we set the tapes up in a locker in the basement. I think I could have sold those tapes. Half the broads in the building were making out with somebody, the married ones, too.

Holly had another love affair going with some hillbilly. They were going to run off and go to Florida soon as they could save the money to buy a car. I confronted her with it. She denied it. So I told her I'd buy her a brand new Caddy if she'd get a divorce. I said, "When you leave for Florida, April better not be with you. And you better never let me catch you playing games in front of the baby." She was not playing any games in the house, both of them were too afraid for that. I played the tapes for her. But she would not get a divorce.

The outfit was coming through with scores. I was working quite a bit with Jimmy, and nearly everyone of our scores were on the cat. I was not invading homes and waking up the people. Leo gave me a score in Springfield, Ill. I gave it to Freddy and some kid he was breaking in named Ralph. I didn't want the score as it was too cold and I don't like to work in cold weather. Freddy said they invaded the home and tied up the people, I don't recall the exact amount of the score. I told Freddy that the lawyer who screwed my mother (I can't remember his name) had a considerable amount of jewelry. Freddy and Ralphie went back to Springfield to try and find the lawyer, they made a couple of home invasions and a couple of cat burglaries. They terrorized the city, but they made no big money.

The outfit gave me a doctor in Peoria. I gave the score to Freddy. I was not too much interested in Illinois scores because we had already tore the North Shore area up. Freddy and Ralphie made the Peoria score for the outfit and went back again on their own, but came up with nothing big. They terrorized Peoria, hit again in Bloomington, then they backed off from Southern Illinois.

Then Leo gave me a beautiful score, it was the Staleys that own Staleys Syrup Co. in Decatur. Leo called my wife and had her tell me to come out to the house. We went

down in the basement. He had a movie projector set up. He ran off a film of the Staley's beautiful mansion, built right next door to their old one.

I took Barry with me on this score. He had just come out of the federal joint and needed money. If I recall correctly it was somewhere in the first part of 1967. Barry and I drove down, looked over the neighborhood, and I moved in that night. Barry and I drove down, Barry watched outside while I opened the doors and went in. Someone was dead in the house, a woman. I locked all the doors back exactly as they were. I said to Barry, "Now is not the time to bother with this, we can always come back in a year or two, no one knows we ever been in the house."

I told Leo what the reason was we came back empty-handed. He blew his top. He said I was going to wind up dead if I kept screwing around. He gave me another score out of the state.

Barry and Charlotte, my wife and I, all left on this trip. The score was a beautiful ranch-style house. Two people. He was a big meat packing executive Leo knew personally. His wife always wore two beautiful rings. We got the parking set up and left the girls in a motel a hundred miles away. I said to my wife, "That is going to be a really tough house to get into." I didn't like the set up. Too much open space in three directions in case something went wrong.

I didn't cut the phone wires, they were underground. All the windows had A.D.T. alarms, and all the doors had police security locks, with chains. It took me an hour to get in. I had to take five doors completely off the hinges, as silently as a cat, without waking the people up. When I walked in the bedroom the people were still sleeping. I eased the covers back off the lady's hands, but she was not

wearing the rings. I tore the house apart while they slept on. I couldn't find the rings. I told Barry we were going to have to wake the people up. I put the pen light on them. The lady was not frightened. We were dressed completely in black, ski-mask and gloves. I said, "Madam, I am sorry about this, but I have to have your rings." She said she had no rings. "Please," I insisted, "don't give me a bad time." She went to the medicine cabinet and got the rings. We taped the people up on the bed and left. I took their '64 caddy and put it in the cemetery.

The strange part of this score was that a week later, when I was coming out of Rugendorf's Meat Packing Co., the same couple were talking with Leo. She had her rings on. You figure that one out. Everybody made a dollar but the insurance company.

Jimmy and Donnie and another kid took a pinch in Westchester County in New York, on a home invasion, and blew a \$200,000 score. They let some broad run in the bathroom and lock the door. She used a phone in there to call the police. They didn't know the neighborhood well enough, got turned around and couldn't find the car. But they beat the rap, no positive identification.

I went on another score out of the state, I worked this one with Barry. It was no invasion, just a cat burglary, for about \$85,000. I took six minks plus the jewelry. We were coming down by New Salem State Park in Petersburg, Ill. about two in the morning. The minks were in the trunk. I didn't like to travel Route 66. Why travel where all the State Troopers are? At the bottom of a hill a state trooper pulled me over. I knew I wasn't speeding. I told Barry, "When the trooper gets out of the car to walk up here, we are leaving. We can't get to those minks in the trunk." If we had been speeding I would have just got the ticket, but I didn't know

then what the stop was for. When the state trooper got almost to my car I shot out fast.

We always carry a can of lighter fluid in the glove compartment when we're carrying minks. I told Barry to spray that lighter fluid in the back, heave a book of matches, and then roll out at the first chance where the copper wouldn't see him. I got a good start on the state trooper, he was on his radio. I hit a curve at the city limits of Petersburg, jammed on the brakes, Barry rolled out with the attache case, guns, and jewelry, I kept going.

The car was blazing. I got to the other side of the city limits, pulled the car over, jumped out, and threw the car keys way out into a field. State police started arriving with all their guns out. They were searching me, looking for the car keys. I said, "Officer, would you mind moving me back in case that gas tank blows?" They wanted to get the trunk open, but by now the car was a blazing inferno. It was a brand new Chrysler Imperial. It melted to the ground, there was nothing in the trunk but ashes.

They took me to the County Court House in Petersburg. I gave them my right name, a phony address. I had burned the phony driver's license, and I had no other I.D. on me. They did not know I was a professional burglar. They set bond at \$2,000. I knew I was entitled to a phone call. I called my wife. She called Leo, Benny Stern showed up at the house with the money for bond, and she sent it on Western Union. Why use my money, it was the outfit's score.

By the time the money got there, they had found out I was a professional burglar. The old country sheriff had to put his two cents worth in. "How does it feel for you big time Chicago guys to come down here and get caught by us hick cops?" I ignored him. I made bond, walked across the street to the first lawyer's office I saw, said "Here is a five

hundred dollar retainer fee, hold things together on this end, my attorney in Chicago will be in touch with you." I caught a cab to Springfield, Ill., twenty miles away. The next thing leaving Springfield for Chicago was a train. I was on it. My wife picked me up at the Union Train Terminal, we drove to Leo's. I told him my partner had the jewelry, I would locate him, and never again would I carry a mink coat even across the street. Leo said to use his lawyer. I said I would stick with my own until he showed me cause not to.

I went over to the barber shop. Frank was running it for me. He was booking for Jackie Cerone and Joe Gags, and picking up juice. The Panczko brothers were there, Pops, Peanuts, Butch. They were the three clown burglars of Chicago. I don't think they ever stole anything in their life without getting caught. They would steal anything that was not nailed down. Every cop in Chicago knew them, so you know I didn't want those people around.

Also a deputy from the Cook County Sheriff's office was hanging around. He was still looking for a whore from when I had the girls working there, or buying stag films for fifteen dollars a roll. What a goofy bastard. He was married to a redhead out of Ohio, and everybody in Chicago knew Frank was making it with his wife. I am sure he had to know it. I told Frank this guy was going to see something sooner or later. Frank said he used him as an errand boy, he ran him downtown to take care of the traffic tickets. I couldn't figure out how in hell that jerk ever was a bailiff and then a deputy sheriff, cause sooner or later he was going to rape some broad.

Then I went down and saw my lawyer, gave him the card of the lawyer in Petersberg, and told him the story. He said not to worry about it.

The next day Leo called. He had a score down South, a

big contracting millionaire. I took Jimmy and Freddy with me. we was going right down and back. I picked up an attache case from Leo and we left. When we got there, I checked out the attache case and wiped everything down. For some reason there was no ski-masks in the case. We tried all over to find some, no luck, so we had to use silk stockings. I don't like to use silk stockings because they distort your features too much, and the victims become hysterical.

I checked out the neighborhood and the expressways. It was really a bad set up. When the cops come in we would have to pass right by them to get on the right expressway. I figured the best way was to definitely not wake up the people. If we did wake them, then we would have to let the cops come in before we left.

We went out about 12 o'clock that night. The first thing we done was push a car out of a garage at a house about four blocks away and park it on the street. We waited around there about a half hour to make sure no one saw us move the car. Then we went down to the contractor's house. It was about a \$200,000 ranch-style home with A.D.T. on the windows and another type of alarm on the doors.

I checked a sliding-door on the patio, no type of alarm. People must be goofy to spend all that money on burglar alarm systems and not bug the big sliding-glass doors. Maybe they figure a burglar can't open them. It took me less than two minutes. I found a round pointed spade in the garage, lifted up one door, it slipped right out of the lock. I eased it back without a sound and stepped into the diningroom area.

Freddy waved, a squad was coming. We lay down on the ground by some shrubbery. This neighborhood was heavily patrolled, they made half hour rounds. The cops

pulled right over up in the circular driveway, flashing their spotlight all over. It was a good thing they never got out of the squad, they would have stepped on one of us. I thought O.K. the next time they come by, the minute they pull out of the driveway, we go in.

They came through again, moved on. I left Freddy in front of the house to keep a watch, told Jimmy to check out the kitchen and back-area of the house to make sure no maid or anyone was sleeping there. By the front door I found the switch to one alarm system, turned it off, and opened the front door. There was a dog following me around wanting to play. I checked out the bedrooms. There was one child about twelve in one room, and two people in the master-bedroom. I was waiting for Jimmy to come up the stairs, he was checking the refrigerator for baby formula. If there was a baby in the house I was going to feed it and change the diaper. I didn't want anything to wake these people up.

Jimmy knocked a big pan off the top of the refrigerator. The woman got up out of bed. The house was pitch dark, she couldn't see me. I was dressed in black. She reached for a light switch in the hallway I didn't know was there. She lightly brushed me as she turned on the switch. If she didn't turn around she wouldn't see me. I didn't move.

She turned, saw me, and went hysterical. I heard Jimmy run out of the house. I couldn't leave, or we would have problems. I pushed her back in the bedroom just as her husband started to get up. I put the gun on him. I said, "Quiet her down, this is only a robbery, no one is going to be hurt, we're only taking your jewelry." She quieted down. I glanced in the bedroom mirror, the stocking mask had my features badly distorted. I switched off the light.

Jimmy and Freddy both came in. I said, "One of you stay here, the other back outside." Freddy stayed. I said, "Watch these people." I went in where the twelve year old was sleeping. I bent down real close. He hadn't heard a sound, I let him sleep. Freddy was rounding up the jewelry. I told him to go bring Jimmy in.

The squad was out in front again. I watched from the side of the drape. They had no idea anyone was in the house. When they drove off I took Jimmy and Freddy one at a time to the side. I said, "We can't tie these people up, we want the squads in behind us when we catch that expressway. We have to let them get to that phone. They are not going to call for ten or twenty minutes after we leave, a half hour at the most, but we have to work fast.

I asked the lady for the keys to her car. I said I was sorry to take her's but our's had broke down. I told them not to call the police. They swore they wouldn't, which I knew was a damn lie. Freddy and Jimmy had her car started. I got in behind the wheel, got up some speed, and a half block from where we had moved the car out of the garage, I shut off the lights and motor and coasted. We got out but slammed no doors. I bent down the back license plate.

We jumped in the second car and started running. We had to get across the big expressway without any cars seeing us. We were getting the breaks, it was a real sick police force. They were coming in, they were coming in with sirens blazing. We made it. We got to our own car. Freddy took off his tie and coat, put on a wig, and laid his head over close to me. Jimmy layed down on the back seat. I drove up on the expressway, a couple of squads went by the other way, but every block put us farther behind them. Freddy started heaving guns, clothes, and burglar tools out along

the highway into the grass. I let Jimmy drive and I changed clothes. All we had in the car now was the jewelry, and if something happened it would be no problem to get rid of it. We hit Chicago.

I dropped the jewelry off at Leo's and went home. Josie said two coppers had been there checking on Gene Regan and a 1964 Cadillac. They were interested in the car because it was from a famous new car agency swindle and bankruptcy pulled by Phil and Leo. I went back out to Leo's place. I said, "Man, I can't be using no work car like this, not with someone checking on it." We went over to the Cadillac Agency. I sold the car under the name of Gene Regan, bought a brand new Candy Apple Red Caddy convertible, all white interior, under the name of Donald Wilkey. Leo bought the old Caddy back under some name or other, I am not sure. All this switching took about one hour.

My wife said my lawyer had called, and I had to be in court in Petersburg, Ill. the next day. I called the lawyer, he told me to pick him up at his house next morning at 4 o'clock. On the way down, Joe said he had sent his investigator down ahead to see what he could find out. All the local cops were looking when we pulled up in the new red Caddy convertible. I parked it right in the Courthouse lot.

We got in court. They charged me with burning a car on a public highway, possession of a stolen car, a bunch of other shit. My lawyer was really beautiful, he wiped out every charge. I never got so much as a fine. How could it be a stolen car, no one had reported it stolen? I owned the car under the name of Jeff Lavern. It was registered at a vacant lot in Chicago. Don't worry, they had done plenty of checking, but they couldn't come up with nothing. And I sure wasn't going to enlighten their minds any.

When I was picking up my bond money the sheriff had a surprise for me. He said, "Boy, I have to arrest you. Seems Des Plaines, Ill. want you held, they will be here to pick you up on some unpaid traffic violations." I said "I'll post bond here." He said, "You can't do that, you have to post bond there." Joe's investigator stepped in, flashed a phony badge, and said, "Sheriff, I told you we are interested in this guy. I'll make sure he gets there. They want him in Tennessee when we get through." I thought god damn he will never get away with this one, but he did. The Sheriff said, "O.K. here's the papers."

Then the Sheriff tried to trick me. He said, "What do you want to do with that Chrysler?" I said, "Sheriff, if I see Jeff I'll tell him you got it. If he don't show up, I suggest you fix it up and you have a new squad car."

"Boy, that car can't never be fixed, and someone owes the county a storage and towing bill."

"Sheriff, that guy Jeff has got a lot of money if you can find him." Then I couldn't resist the temptation to go a little further. I said, "Sheriff, a few months ago you asked me how it felt to get caught by country cops. Now let me ask you something. How does it feel to get it stuck right up your ass by a big time Chicago lawyer?" Joe was pulling my arm, saying let's go. I think if Joe had not been there the Sheriff would have shot me. Back in Des Plaines they hit me with a five grand bond on traffic violations. I posted it and walked out.

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983).

The current study was undertaken as a result of a request from a local authority to conduct a research project to investigate the needs of people with mental health problems who were in contact with the police. The project was funded by the local authority and the research was carried out over a period of 12 months. The study was designed to explore the needs of people with mental health problems who were in contact with the police and to identify the services that they needed.

The study was conducted in a police station in a large city in the south of England. The police station was chosen because it was a place where people with mental health problems were likely to be in contact with the police. The study was conducted in a police station because it was a place where people with mental health problems were likely to be in contact with the police. The study was conducted in a police station because it was a place where people with mental health problems were likely to be in contact with the police.

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8



The Frame

When I got home Josie told me Leo had called up several times about something very important. I called Leo, he told me to meet him at his grocery store at 37th and Indiana. When I got over there I saw only Leo's old '59 Chevy and a light in the back office. I kicked the door, Leo let me in. We walked in the back, Phil and Leo both pulled a gun on me. Phil said, "You dirty rotten mother fucker we are going to kill you an inch at a time, we're going to hang you up on a meat hook in the freezer. Before we get through with you, you're going to beg for a 38 in the head." Phil shoved a newspaper in my face, said, "Here, read this you bastard, so you know what you're getting it for." The headline said **THREE MASKED GUNMEN INVADE A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE'S HOME, TERRORIZE FAMILY AND ESCAPE WITH \$170,000 IN JEWELS AND CASH.** Also there were a list of the items taken. I was really frightened, I knew these two bastards would kill me and never think twice.

Phil said, "You son-of-a-bitch, where are the earrings and the woman's watch?" I looked at the paper again. An \$18,000 set of earrings and a woman's watch valued at \$3,000 was missing. I said, "Phil, this paper is lying, I never saw those two pieces." Phil said, "One of you three bastards are holding out, and we will find out who it is."

They let me go, I was one scared son of a bitch. No way were these two playing any games.

I went back and asked Jimmy and Freddy about it, they denied holding out anything.

About three weeks went by, I heard no more about it. My court-date showed up in Des Plaines, Josie and I drove out there. I am looking around for my lawyer, I can't find him. I call his office. He answers. I said, "Man, I got a court-date out here."

He said, "Don't worry, I got a local attorney out there handling it. He knows everyone out there."

"I don't like this one bit, if I would have wanted a local lawyer I would have hired one."

He said everything would be all right. My court-docket was called, some ass-hole steps up there and pleads me guilty. I said, "Hey wait a minute Mr. I am not pleading guilty to nothing." He said don't worry. I said, "Your Honor, I got to get rid of this lawyer, I don't even know the guy."

The judge tells me to shut up, this is his courtroom, and he starts reading my whole criminal record off, the police had sent it out to him. I asked what has my criminal record got to do with a traffic case? He said, "I'll tell you what it has to do with it. I wish to god I could send you to prison." He fined me seven hundred dollars and said, "If you can't pay it you are going to jail."

I said, "Your Honor, I may just be able to squeeze it out." I had seven hundred in my pocket plus, but my wife had eight grand in her purse she was going to put in the bank that day. I got the eight grand, and threw it on the clerk's desk. I said, "Kind of sort that out and take what you need, I don't count very well."

The judge was smoking, he said, "One more word out

of you or anything, you go to jail for contempt of court." I never said anything. I picked up my money and walked out. (Judge if you ever read this book, I want you to know. If I had not got my money back out of Des Plaines, you old son-of-a-bitch, we would have took it out of your house if we could have found out where you lived.)

About a month later my lawyer called. He said, "Frank you still owe six hundred on the Des Plaines case."

I said, "Pal you are paid in full, you will never get one dime, not only did you send some asshole to plead me guilty, you lost a good customer and a friend, and a lot of other professional thieves you would have gotten sooner or later." He was a good lawyer and I hated to lose him. But sometimes it's not what you know but who you know.

When we got home from Des Plaines, Leo was on the phone. He told me to meet him at 37th and Indiana at the grocery store. Him and Phil both were there. Phil said, "We have a big score in Pennsylvania, in the Wynwood suburbs. But you can't go. We are sending another guy with Freddy and Jimmy, he knows the house and the neighborhood real well, he ripped off a place up there in the same neighborhood for about three hundred thousand before. There is a safe in this house, and he knows the combination. Also we know this woman has two very expensive coats, one is a leopard skin, the other is a chinchilla. We definitely have to have the coats, also there's around \$20,000 in jewelry. Get them ready to go, and we will have the other guy meet them."

I said, "Why not talk to Freddy and Jimmy?"

Phil said, "We don't want to talk to anyone. Just do as you're told. You've been taking care of it so why change? And don't tell them we said you couldn't go, cause if they don't go you all three going to have big problems."

I left and for all hell I couldn't figure out why it was so important that they go and not me. I knew I was just as good a burglar if not better. I found Jimmy and Freddy and told them about the score. They said they would be ready in a couple of days, they didn't want to leave on the week-end.

That night I shot my finger off. Josie had went out with her friend. I was home watching T.V. and cleaning a 32 automatic I kept in the house. I pulled out the clip, jacked one out of the chamber. I thought the barrel was cleared. I held back the slide and sprayed on gun oil. The slide back ejector slipped and blew off my little finger.

I tried to stop the bleeding with a bath-towel. I called four or five places trying to find Josie. I couldn't find her. I called Jimmy, he and Linda came over. I showed him what had happened, and had him drop me off in front of the Hospital in Oak Park and drive off so he wouldn't have to answer any questions. I went in and told the doctor I caught my finger in a car door. He took one look and said, "I have to call the police, this is a gun-shot wound. I can't treat it here, it has to be treated at Cook County Hospital." The police asked me what happened. I said two Puerto Ricans stuck me up and I ran. They wanted their description. I said 5-5, dark complexion, curly hair. The cop said hell most Puerto Ricans look like that, we don't believe you. I said well that's the only story you will ever get from me.

They took me to Cook County Hospital. I told the doctor to take the finger the rest of the way off. Some intern from Indiana said let him see if he could save it. He worked on it a couple hours, it's still there today, a little crooked but there. He wouldn't let me go home, he said I had to stay there two or three days. I tried to give him three hundred for the finger, but he wouldn't take it.

They put me in the ward with a bunch of winos. Those guys were really in bad shape, they had laid around over on

Madison St. and froze off hands, feet, ears, everything else. I called Josie, she was shocked I was in the hospital. I told her to bring me a change of clothes and a pair of shoes on Sunday. She came up, I got dressed and walked out, I never told anyone I was going. I gave each of the old winos a fin and sent Josie back up with 10 cartons of cigs, all different kinds, and a bunch of other junk. The old guys didn't have nothing.

We came home. I got so sick for two days she couldn't get enough covers on me to keep me warm. She had to stay in bed with me to keep me warm.

The fourth day after Freddy and Jimmy left, Linda, Jimmy's wife, called me and said they got busted in Philadelphia. I told her I would be right over. She didn't have much of the details. I tried to buy a Philly paper, there was nothing there. I went out to Leo, I said listen these two guys got popped in Philly. He said let's go talk to somebody. We went out to Phil's house in Riverside. (I always drove when I was with Leo, he had real bad eyes, a disease called glaucoma. He was going blind.)

Phil told me, "Listen you son of a bitch, that was no accident, they was busted on purpose. We told you about holding out the jewelry. They even held out on you. And I hope each one of those mother fuckers gets a million years. You keep your nose out of this, and the first thing tomorrow morning you and Leo both have your ass down to the lawyer's office. Give him some money in case they try to pull you in on this, and they will never get you out of Chicago.

I saw the lawyer the next morning. He told me don't worry about being drug in, you wasn't there. I was really sick. I thought man those rotten son-of-a-bitches. I went home.

Josie and I moved, there was a bug on our phone. This

was the first time I knew she wanted me to quit stealing, the first time the subject was even mentioned. She was not the nagging type. But she is real smart, it took me years to find that out. I never ever got away with one thing on her, she caught me and tricked me every time. But she had planted a seed and she and only she would make it grow. We went over to Linda, she was seven months pregnant. I told her not to worry about the doctor bill or anything else and to call Jimmy every chance that she could. I would take care of the bills. I took Josie home.

Edna got a hold of fat ass Nello, the con man wop fence. He hired a Chicago lawyer named Irving Smith, a good criminal lawyer. But Block never stood a chance with this case from the word go. The whole case was full of lies. I say more than one, because I am positive of one lie, and where there is one lie there is more. Here is what the papers had on the robbery and how I know it was a bunch of crap.

The papers said a back window was busted. But Jimmy and Freddy were both good burglars, they didn't have to bust windows.

The papers said a woman was raped by two of the gang. I don't believe they raped her, they had no reason to, they both had beautiful wives. Freddy was a rapo once. He done time for it in New York. But I had told Jimmy and Freddy a million times I would never work with a burglar who ever touched a woman in a house. They knew I was death against that. I was after jewelry and money, not sex. I knew a million broads. And Jimmy and Freddy liked working with me, and I am sure they knew if word ever got to me they pulled a rape, I'd never work with them again.

The papers said the victim was in her 50's. What in the hell would they want with a woman that old? When their wives are in their early 20's?

Next the papers said the third man was a Negro. I am sure Jimmy or Freddy would not work with a black, and not because of his race or skin. I know plenty of good blacks, but I don't know any professional thieves who are black. There are a few I am sure, I don't know any.

Last, the papers said the woman claimed they stole five thousand dollar bills. If she said that, I know for sure she is a god damn liar. I gave Freddy those thousand dollar bills.

Where there is one lie there is more. I told Edna I was not going near that court room. I said if this trial goes bad, set up an escape for them.

She set up the escape. Freddy missed the connection. Jimmy made the connection and got away. Freddy had to drive off a railroad trestle, and when he did, he hit pilings in the water down below and tore his whole chest out. That was the end of a professional jewel thief. He died a free man.

Jimmy made it back to Chicago. He called me. I said, "I am not sure if this phone is tapped or not. Don't say anything, just listen. Do you remember where we used to keep our first work car? I'll meet you there."

We used to keep our first work car right on my lot like it was for sale. I went through a couple of changes getting over there so if the cops or feds were looking for me to meet him they sure got lost on the way. I gave him money and my gun. I told him this was the worst city in the world for him to be in, most of the cops in the city knew him by sight. I made out a title to a Chev Convertible on the lot under a phony name. I told him to steal a set of license plates off a wreck and use them until he could get the license and title straight. Then I asked him what happened.

He said he did not know the third guy, but he was not a professional burglar, he was too anxious to get out of the

house. There was a safe in the house, and the third guy couldn't open it. The woman said she didn't know the combination and this guy was in such a hurry he wouldn't let Freddy or him open it. They took two coats, a leopard and a chinchilla, a small amount of jewelry. The third guy was driving a new Oldsmobile. He would not carry the coats nor the guns. He took some of the jewelry, and he left first. They waited a half hour, they didn't want two cars right together on the turnpike.

I asked was the guy black? Jimmy said no, Italian. I asked did anybody rape the broad? He said no. I asked how did they get caught? He said this son-of-a-bitch dropped a dime, called the state police, gave them their license number, told them what kind of car they were driving. The state police tried to stop them, it wound up in a running gun battle, and a bad chase on the turnpike. Freddy lost control of the Caddy, ran off in a field, and they got caught.

I told him the outfit set him up. He didn't believe me. I told him that him and Freddy held out the watch and earrings and they found out. Jimmy admitted they sold the watch to Benny Stern and the earrings to Joe Gags.

Jimmy and I parted bitter enemies. He believes to this day I knew the outfit was setting them up, but I didn't know until it was too late.

I was really shook up bad, and I went to see Basil "the Owl" Bankhart. He was a sharp old man, an ex-con I had done time with. We were friends in the joint. I told him what had happened. (Basil was going straight and still is to this day, if he is around.) He said, "I know what it is kid, I been down that road a million times and I wouldn't go back down it for a million bucks or all the money in the world. You have not really saw anything yet. The outfit is the

dirtyest son-of-a-bitches who ever walked the face of the earth. You better try to get out now while you can. But I think it's too late. You are one of the best jewel thieves going. They are never going to turn you loose. There are three ways out for you now. You get killed on a score, they kill you, or you get so much heat on you and so many cops watching you, you can't get out of sight to make a score. If they can't use you, they may ease you out. But not if they are afraid you will talk. Or they will have you gunned down out of the state, or framed by the coppers. You are in a bad way now. So if you ever used your head, you've got to use it now. This is going to be your biggest score."

1

Freddy Malchow, member of Hohimer's home invasion gang, killed in a jailbreak in Pennsylvania in 1967. (UPI Telephoto)



2

Aerial view of Senator Charles H. Percy's Kenilworth (Ill.) mansion where Valerie Percy was murdered in 1966. (UPI Telephoto)



1

2

3

Jimmy Evans, convicted with Malchow for rape and robbery at a Lynnewood (Pa.) mansion in 1967. (UPI Telephoto)



4

"Milwaukee Phil" Alderisio, crime syndicate kingpin and Hohimer's boss in Chicago. (UPI Telephoto)

3



4

5
Basil "The Owl" Bankhart,
member of the old Roger Touhy
gang, and Hohimer's close
friend from Stateville. (Acme)



5

6
Wayne Hohimer, brother of
Frank Hohimer. He claimed
his brother admitted participation
in the Percy killing. (Chicago
Sun-Times)



6

7

Leo Rugendorf, a crime syndicate gangster who specialized in fencing stolen jewels. Hohimer's connection. (Chicago Tribune)



7

B

Frank Hohimer's burglary kit. Included in the kit are guns, lock-puller, crowbar, tape, screwdriver, torch, and ski masks. Missing is a butcher-knife police claim Hohimer carried before the Valerie Percy murder.



8

9



Getting Hot

I knew I had to start really pouring the heat on myself. I had to really get hot and not get caught. I sold all the cars off the car lot, I just closed up the body and fender shop and garage, the gas station and the Rock-A-Go-Go, and walked off and left them. I gave the barber shop to Frank, it was a gold mine and he still has it today. He had worked for me, and he worked and loaned juice for the outfit, but he was lucky enough to be able to quit without getting killed. Now he was getting old and sick and he just wanted to raise his family. Not too sick or old. I even gave him my broad Joyce, a real sharp go-go broad. Frank still has her to this day too. He has her and the shop.

Now I had no visible means of support. I was riding the streets day and night in a brand new red and white Caddy Convertible. I was wearing seventy and eighty dollar slacks and shirts, two hundred dollar suits, a watch loaded with diamonds, and a perfect 2 karat diamond ring. Anytime anyone asked me how do you make a living, I said I was a burglar. Plus I was spending a lot of time with the cops. I was always in and out of the 14th district, two vice and narcotics cops from the 14th were my good friends. We went out together a lot, I didn't drink hardly anything, but we would make the rounds. One time they wanted to go deer-hunting. I called my brother-in-law who is honest but

owns a lot of property with deers on it. They all went down and had a ball.

The outfit still had me making scores at least once a week. I had broke in Barry Ricketson, he was my only partner now. I screamed and hollered and threatened like a mad man until I had Barry trained like I wanted him. Today he is one of the best burglars and jewel thieves in the country. I hope to god the kid quits now after this beef and this book. He is still remaining loyal to the outfit. But they will never return that loyalty. He is just about ready to finish up a two to five for the bastards now. Like a fool he will probably take another beef for them, and the only payment he will get for his loyalty is a bullet in the head from them or some copper, or they will send him out to die. Good luck Barry. I know god damn well you can't be blind enough not to see what they have done to me, John, Freddy, Jimmy, Joey D, Mike, Cyril Gargano, Billy Jackson, and even to yourself.

The feds and the C.I.U. both were on my trail, especially the C.I.U. which is supposed to have the top cops in the Chicago area, the ones that solve all the big crimes. But I had pictures of every C.I.U. agent in the city, I knew every one. The only thing they were catching was a cold and a headache.

Our phones were all bugged, they put beepers on our cars. We kept right on working.

I had bought half-interest in the little F & Z lounge on Armitage and Kedzie, not for the money but to have somewhere to go. I didn't have to work, I could come and go as I pleased. A petty larceny burglar owned the other half.

One night a Lieutenant pinched the joint and lined everyone but me up against the wall (the cop and me were

friends). There was about thirty customers in the joint, and the cop got all their names. Every god damn single one had a record, he couldn't believe it. But nothing happened because some of the cops had worked as door men for me, for \$20 a night and all they could drink, when I had the big joint with entertainment.

Some of the C.I.U. was always hanging around, trying to buy some diamonds from me, and make friends. They had no idea I knew them. I would tell the customers at the bar I was a jewel thief and a burglar. The C.I.U. had a code name for me now, "The Fox." They were losing plenty of sleep trying to stay up with me, but they couldn't get next to me no kind of way. They were so god damn mad they were going crazy. The C.I.U. will frame you, kill you, lie on you, do anything in the world to get you.

But not the feds or F.B.I. When they move in to pinch you they have you right, with no lies involved. It will be a good pinch and a clean one. They will never pinch you until they got you right, and they will work twenty years to pinch you if they have to. And ninety-nine times out of a hundred you will not beat or fix the rap once they get you. You're going to jail. So that is the difference between the pros and the amateurs. The feds were working on me too, but they were not about to move in on me until they had me. That is why they would not do anything illegal to get me. The C.I.U. was using every trick in the books, but they were way out of their class with me. I'd slip out from under their noses and go make a score. They would hear about it on the teletype, or in the papers, and try to get me when I came back in the city. But I'd get back in the city and they would not even know I was back for a week.

Leo was really on my ass. He was saying, "Shut up, you talk too much, you are going to get pinched, or caught,

every cop in the city is after you.” He sure didn’t want that. I had put over a million dollars in jewels in their hands in no time. He didn’t want to lose me. I was a good thing.

Leo called me one day, said come out to the house, he had a stag film to show me. He set up the movie projector, and ran off a film of a big beautiful mansion on a big estate in Indianapolis. I said, “Who lives here?”

He said, “Helen Noyes, her maiden name is Lilly. Her relative is H. J. Lilly, the big pharmaceutical owner. She has close to a quarter of a million dollars in that house in jewels, and also there is a five million dollar coin collection that could very well be in that house. We are not exactly sure just where the coin collection is, but we are working on finding out for positive.”

I drove up and took a look at it. It was in the Crows Nest area, nothing but millionaires and mansions. I knew the area, it was the same place where Freddy and John had took \$40,000 in cash from a big restaurant owner about six months before. Freddy had plenty of nerve and so did Jimmy, and they were both real sharp, but they came within an inch of getting caught. You couldn’t pay them five million to go back in the neighborhood. The police force there is sharp, plus the millionaires have their own security patrol. The only way Jimmy and Freddy got out of the neighborhood was by staying in the basement of the house next-door to the score the rest of the night, and all the next day. They even had trouble getting out the next night.

I drove through the neighborhood with my wife and Linda, once in the day and once in the night. The place was crawling with cops and squads, and there was nowhere in the town to set up safe parking. My wife and Linda Evans said I would have to be a raving maniac to even think about going into that neighborhood, I would never make it in or out.

This group of mansions was set high on a hill, with two rivers, one running in the back and one along one side. The rivers had high banks damn near like cliffs. In the front of the subdivision was two big stone pillars and one road leading in that dead-ended into the river over a cliff. Two private patrols set at the entrance to the road. At night one of those cars was always at that gate and the other one drove up and down the road and the watchmen got out of the car and checked the front doors on the mansions. The bad thing was there was just no place to set up safe parking. If you drove a car in or out of that neighborhood, you were busted, those cops stopped everything moving. And even if you got in you couldn't drive one of their cars back out. Not only would the police stop you, but chances are they knew the family and their car.

We went up there three different times. I showed it to three different burglars, they wanted no part of the score, it was too tough.

I told Leo, "That score is too tough, no one wants any part of it."

He blew his top. He said, "I know you can get it. The stuff is there. I got a key to the house."

I said, "A key is not important. I can get in without a key. But getting in and out of that neighborhood is damn near next to impossible. Supposing I could get in and out and the coins are there. How in the hell do I carry a five million dollar coin collection? I had three burglars up there, they won't work on the score it is too dangerous. Also Jimmy and Freddy said the minute something happens they seal off the whole neighborhood."

He said, "Here is another score, this guy is an oil millionaire."

I said, "Leo, the C.I.U. is really onto me. If we make this score, we don't bring it back into the city. Someone

picks it up outside the city. We set up drops at four truck-stops on each side of the city.”

The C.I.U. had my phone bugged and a beeper on my car, but the only thing they heard on the phone was what I wanted them to hear. I wanted them to know I was taking a trip tomorrow. I called Leo. I told him I'd pick up the attache case at the usual place at 3 o'clock next afternoon. I called Barry, I said to pack up a suitcase, we were taking a trip. I knew the C.I.U. was jumping up and down saying we're going to catch this bastard this time.

I put an empty suitcase in my caddy. (You will see why in a minute.) I picked up Barry, he had done the same. While the C.I.U. was watching me, Leo's man Tony got the attache case with the tools and left it in the trunk of his car over on Division St. I drove over on the South Side to a wrecking yard owned and run by the outfit, the C.I.U. right behind. I picked up an empty attache case. As I was coming out I ran into the C.I.U. agents. I damn near laughed in their faces. They didn't know what to do for a few seconds, so they walked into the building across the street. (I'd like to know what the hell they told the guy there when they walked in.)

I drove off smiling. They didn't want to just bust me with burglar tools and guns. If they did, I'd be out on bond in two minutes and fix the beef. They knew this. And even if they had pinched me right there, I was clean anyway.

I left there, drove to the F & Z lounge, left there and went to the Lyons ballroom, talked with the Greek who ran the place, ate, got up and walked across the street to the Pick and Chick Restaurant on Grand Ave. & North, went out the back door, through a couple of yards, picked up Tony's car (with the tools in the trunk) on Division, drove to the Loop, rented a car from Hertz, we were on our way. The

C.I.U. was still watching my car. I guess they didn't want anybody to steal it. I don't know how long they watched it, the Greek said three days.

We drove to Indianapolis. I dropped Barry off at a motel with the attache case, and I drove off to a storage garage where I had a new Lincoln work-car. I came back and picked up Barry. We went to look over the neighborhood, and then checked into a motel a hundred miles from the score. I never sign a motel register. Barry checked us in. We went straight to sleep. I never went into a neighborhood tired, sleepy or fatigued. I figured the police were mentally alert, so I took the same precaution for myself.

When we woke I opened up the attache case, dumped everything on the bed. I keep talking about my attache case, let me tell you what was in it. This was my burglar kit, the F.B.I. has it right now as evidence. Four guns (two 45 automatics with an extra clip for each one, a 38 revolver snub nose, one tranquilizer gun) six penlights, a butane torch, ice pick, butcher knife, glass cutter, four rolls of 3-inch wide tape, several pieces of different gauge plastic, a small leather jeweler's case with about twenty different-type lock-picks, a Suzi and bolt-cutters, wire-cutters, and a lock juller. (A suzi is a 16-inch pair of pliers, you put it on a door-knob and turn it. It breaks the lock silently.) The wire-cutters are the World War I type, almost 3 ft. long when unfolded. With the butcher-knife you can cut a panel right out of some doors silently, the ice pick you use to shove through the screen door and flip up an inside-lick, or you can heat the tip of the ice pick and work a small silent hole in the window to push a lock open. We also kept three ski-masks and three pairs of gloves in there.

The estate was enclosed in a heavy-mesh fence, with a huge Doberman Pinscher patrolling the yard. He didn't

bark but he was not letting you come over that fence. I shot him with the tranquilizer gun and in a few minutes he went to sleep. I dragged him to the garage and locked him in their car. I don't know how long this dog slept.

I went into the home through sliding-doors I opened with the butcher knife. They opened into a bedroom. I stepped out from behind the drapes, walked over by the bed. An elderly man was snoring. I put my hand under his pillow and then checked the night-stand for a gun. Nothing. I checked the next bedroom, a really beautiful blonde was sleeping in the nude (a real blonde). I checked her hands out, she had on a 4-karat marque diamond. I checked the rest of the house. Just these two people.

I told Barry I might have to wake these people up. I said, "Stay right there by the guy's bed in case he wakes up. I am going to see if I can slip the ring off her finger."

We went back in the house (we always walk back outside if we are going to talk, so as not to wake anyone up). Barry waited by the guy's bed. I went into her bedroom. I took off my glove, put the pen-light in my mouth, and put my hand under the covers to get it warm so it would be close to her same body-temperature. I didn't want to wake her up with a cold hand. I placed my hand over hers, she didn't wake up. I was watching her eyes. I put a steady pressure on the ring. It was too tight, she woke up. I put the pen-light in her face. She didn't scream, and she didn't seem too frightened. I told her we only wanted her jewelry and money. I handed her her robe, she put it on, we went into the other bedroom. We had to shake the guy to get him awake, he wore a hearing-aid. After we rounded up the jewelry I said, "Honey we will have to tie you up."

She said, "Could I talk with you a few minutes first?"

I said, "Sure why not it's your home."

Now I was mentally alert for any type of trick. She pointblank asked me how much I would charge to kill her husband (like I am an authority on murder and it has a set price). I said, "What would it be worth to you?"

She said, "Well I have never done this before so I don't know, would ten thousand be correct?"

I said, "What about more like thirty thousand?"

"All right."

"Fine, we are in business. Do you have the money here in the house?"

"No."

"Well how about a down-payment."

"I have no money here, I can go to the bank tomorrow and get it."

If she had the money in the house I would have taken it anyway and done nothing. I said, "Honey that would really be a smart move for me. I come to meet you and the police are waiting."

"Oh no I wouldn't do that."

I was glancing at a phone book. I opened the first page and saw the F.B.I. number and closed it. I said, "Honey I'll tell you how we are going to work this so we can both be safe. Do you have a pencil handy?" She started to open a drawer, I said, "Don't open that drawer, I'll get it for you." I was not about to ever take my eyes off that bitch for one second or let her stick her hand in no drawer. She was one cold blooded mother-fucker. We had just gotten through discussing the terms for murder and it meant no more to her than you discussing the latest book you read.

I gave her the pencil and the phone number. I said, "Now you call this number three days from now. When I answer the phone I'll say F.B.I. and that way you can be sure you're talking to me, and you tell me what you want

and I'll be sure it's you." She wrote it down. I said, "Now I have to tie you up to make this robbery look good." She said she understood, the maid would untie her in the morning. I tied her ass up good with tape. She had one more request. Would I take off my mask? I said, "Honey you can see my face when I pick up the money."

When we got back to our car, I told Barry what the broad said, he wouldn't believe me. To this day he thinks I am bullshitting. I been in a lot of homes and I never had that request before or after. I wonder if she made that phone call.

On our way back to Indianapolis we threw away the black suits and shoes. I parked the Lincoln two blocks from the bus station, walked in and put the attache case in a locker, pulled out the key, put the Lincoln back in storage, paid the bill, picked up the rented car. Stopped at the pay phone. Called Leo and said skyway and hung up. Now he knew I was coming back to Chicago and he would have someone at the truck stop.

At the truck stop I saw Natalie sitting at the counter. (Natalie is a real beautiful Italian girl, Milwaukee Phil's girlfriend.) I had the key in my mouth all the way from Indianapolis, in case I drew a stop I could either swallow it or throw it away. I sat down at the counter next to her. Neither of us spoke a word although we knew each other well. If anybody had followed her out of Chicago they could make no connection between us. I ordered coffee, picked up a napkin, wiped my mouth, put the key in the napkin, put it down. When I glanced back down the key was gone. My job was done, the rest was up to her.

Next the outfit set up R.J. Reynolds, of Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston Salem, North Carolina. I was sent down to rip him off. They had not filmed the house, but I

had the address. When we got down there we ran into a small problem. Seemed like half the people of that area was named Reynolds. I didn't want to make a mistake. I thought the hell with it, this is the address they gave me. We went out that night, they lived on a corner in a big two-story white home. I opened the door and went in. I went completely through the house. They must have been on vacation. I locked everything back just like it was. I never bothered anything. I figured that way we could always come back when he was home. I doubt that the man will ever know until he reads this book that anyone was ever in his house.

When I got back to Chicago they wanted me to go rip off Elvis Presley in Memphis. Barry and I drove down there, he lived in a big brick mansion on Route 51. When we drove by, there were guards in front, the estate was all fenced off, and people were crowded all out in front of the place. I set up parking, and we came back that night, through the back way by his riding stable. It was about two in the morning, and I could see him and several other people in there through the window. It looked like they had a party going in there that was never going to end. I told Barry there was a lot of people in that house for two guys to invade. This could get out of hand, with those guards out in front. And somebody would have to check upstairs, that left one person with that mob. We left.

When I dropped off the work car in Indianapolis I took a ride by the Crows Nest area to look over the Noyes score again. I thought I saw a way in and out of the neighborhood. I rechecked it again. It could be done, but it was dangerous. One mistake and you were trapped, and you had to be extra careful no one saw you going in or out. If they did you never stood a chance. I told Barry I thought I

could make that score in Indiana. He was not too anxious. He said, "Hell there are plenty of neighborhoods easier than that." I said we need four guys, if that four million dollar coin collection is there. I told him how I was going to do it. He said I was crazy as hell. I would never find two more burglars to go in there like that, it was suicide if anybody saw us going in or coming out. He had talked to some other burglars, no one wanted any part of it. I told Barry screw them, we will use a couple of amateurs.

I told Colin Green and Wayne to get out of town and meet me in a motel in Indianapolis. The C.I.U. didn't know these two petty larceny thieves. I went over on Milwaukee Ave. and bought an inflatable rubber boat and extra ski-masks and gloves. We juggled around and got out of Chicago.

We met the other two burglars at the motel but Wayne backed out. I decided to try it with the three of us. It was a beautiful night for a burglary, warm and pitch black. I decided to park over by the university behind the two rivers. There was a clump of trees off to one side of the university. I used my Caddy convertible, the gold one, so we could let the top down. Barry, Colin Green, and I got in my Caddy. We left Wayne and Charlotte, Barry's girl friend, at the motel with a new Mustang in case we blew my Caddy. I drove by the clump, pulled over and slowed down. Barry threw the rubber boat and Colin threw the attache case. I drove up about a mile, we put up the top. I said, "When I drive by again real slow, both of you roll out and down the bank and wait for me. Make damn sure no one sees you. I'll park the car and be back."

I parked the car about a mile away and made it back through yards and over back-fences. They were waiting. We made our way through a park and down a dead-end

road for about a mile, to the river, carrying the boat and tools. Houses were lined on both sides of the road so we had to be careful. We got to the end, stripped down to the nude, took the guns and the gloves out of the attache case, put everything in the boat, and made it across.

We were now directly in behind the estates. There was a place to pull up the boat just enough so it could not be seen from the other side. I checked the water out, it was pretty deep. I wanted to make sure I didn't get killed coming off that cliff into the water. We got dressed and came up the back way on the estate. I made them wait in the back while I checked the front of the house.

There was an unmarked squad with two guards parked right in the circular driveway. I stepped back and watched them for about twenty minutes. They were talking about the St. Louis Cards. I was so close I could have reached in and touched them, but they didn't know I was within a million miles.

I went to the back of the house, told Colin and Barry there was a squad right out in front. Colin was ready to leave. I said, "Man they have no idea anyone is in this neighborhood." I gave Colin my 45 with the extra clip, I took the 38 snub nose, and Barry had a 45 with an extra clip. I said, "One of you stay on each side of the house, I am going in. If either one of those cops gets out of that squad and starts toward this house, empty one of those clips into the backdoor of that squad and make for the river. I'll hear the shots and come out of the house. Those two cops won't hang around with guns popping." I knew Barry would do it, but I was not too sure about Colin.

I walked to the back door, slipped the key Leo gave me in the lock, it opened right up. I was in the kitchen. I looked in the refrigerator and had an ice cube, it was real

hot out. I went into the front room, peeped out the drapes. The watchmen were still sitting there. I unlocked the front door but left the chain on. I checked out the downstairs, no one was there. I checked the basement. I spotted a big safe, looked it over real good. It was locked. The only way I could open it would be to peel it because I had no tools with me to punch it, burn it, or drill it. I went up the stairs to the third floor. I had to walk real close to the wall because the steps were squeaky. I got to the landing without a sound, checked the window on the landing. The squad was still there.

I went the rest of the way up, checked out the bedrooms upstairs. There was one man, the nurse, the maid, the butler, the owner, and some other lady. I couldn't take a chance looking for the jewels with that squad car out in front. I had to wake these people up, it would be too dangerous if one of them woke up and screamed. I walked back into the man's bedroom, ran my hand under his pillow, and checked his night-stand for a gun. Nothing. I made sure he was still sleeping, went back down the stairs and outside. The squad was still there. I said to the other guys we had to go in the house and get those people up.

Colin was a little leary. I told him, "When we go up those stairs, you wait on the landing and watch that squad, never take your eyes off it for one second. And walk exactly where I do going up those steps. Don't worry about what goes on behind you. Barry and I will take care of that." I had Barry wait in the hall. I said, "If anyone of those women wake up, get in that room fast. I am going to wake this guy up first."

I walked in the bedroom. I knew this had to be brutal and cold and swift so nothing went wrong. I jammed my hand down over the guy's mouth sort of hard. I flicked the

pen-light on with my tongue and put the 38 right against his head. That is a hell of a way to be waked up, but I couldn't take any chances. I wanted this guy to get the message fast. He was terrified. I said, "Mister listen real closely, if you scream or holler one time you are dead. Do just as you are told, this is a robbery, we are taking only the money and jewels. Now you are going to wake the women up and get the message to them without them screaming or hollering, cause if they do there may be a gun battle in this house and a lot of people will get killed. This house of full of masked gunmen, from top to bottom, you will see them when you step out in the hall. If you understand me shake your head and I'll move my hand."

I had whispered all this to him in a low voice. He shook his head. I lit a cigarette and gave it to him. I said, "Can you get the girls up without trouble?" He said he'd manage it. When we stopped out in the hallway he saw two more masked gunmen. He went in the bedroom where three of the women were sleeping. I stood just outside the door.

He woke all three of them up and said, "Don't make any noise whatsoever. If you holler or scream we will all be hurt. Some gentlemen have come to get Mrs. Noyes' jewelry and when they have it, they are going to leave. I am going to call them in now so you can talk to them." I walked in, Barry stayed in the hall. I said, "Girls, no one will be hurt, this is just a robbery, we're taking the jewelry and money and then we will leave." They were frightened, but cooperative. One of the ladies said, "I am Mrs. Noyes's nurse, I had better wake her up." I said that would be fine. I told the ladies to put on their robes if they wished.

The nurse woke up Mrs. Noyes, and I waited right outside the door. She was not frightened, she was a very brave woman. I stepped into the bedroom and said, "Mrs.

Noyes, I will have to take your jewelry and money, but no one will be harmed." She said, "I don't have much jewelry left. I have given most of it to my grandchildren, but I will give you what is left." She gave me a \$37,000 emerald set with tear drop diamonds on the side, a solid gold Pigot Pirex watch set in diamonds, and a hundred thousand dollars worth of other jewelry. All total she gave me \$137,000 worth of jewels and almost two thousand in cash.

The other three women and the man tried to give me their money and jewelry. I refused to take it. I said, "You people are working for a living. Mrs. Noyes is insured, so she won't lose anything, and the insurance company will just rob somebody else like they do every day." Turning to Mrs. Noyes I said, "You are ill and not feeling too well, so why don't we let your nurse give you some medication, and then you can help me open the safe."

She said, "I don't really feel up to making the trip down there, and there is really nothing of value in the safe, you have everything of value."

I said, "What about the coin collection? I have very reliable information that the coin collection is here."

"No it's not here. Mr. _____ has it."

I said, "I believe you Mrs. Noyes. We are going to have to tie everyone up very loosely so we have enough time to get away." They consented.

I did tie everyone very loosely because they were all elderly. The squad was still out in front. I locked the front door and the back door, and we all ran for the river. I gave Barry my clothes, I stayed on the cliff naked with just the 38. I told them to flash the pen-light three times when they got on the other side and then I'd come. From where I was I had a ringside view. The people in the house must have been on the phone as soon as we left. The squads were

really pouring in, there were search-lights all over the area. They were sealing off the neighborhood. That was good. That meant once across the river we were in pretty good shape. We were behind the seal-off and could hit the expressway on the way out.

They flashed the light three times, and I went off the cliff into the water. It was cold as ice. Halfway across I lost the 38, but I figured to hell with it I could buy another one. I left the house key in the river and made the other bank. I told Barry to stick the butcher knife in the rubber boat and to throw it as far out as he could. I got dressed.

They wanted to hurry out of the neighborhood, but we took our time. We sure as hell didn't want anyone to see us and get a search started over there. We made it to the clump and I made them both wait right there. They didn't like that. I said, "Listen, if that car is staked out they got nothing but me and I am as clean as the board of health. They couldn't convict me in a million years. I'll pick up the car, flash my lights one time and stop. Don't run out until I stop, cause if there is a car or anyone in sight I will not stop. I will be back."

I got the car and picked them up. I told them to both lay down in the car and start changing clothes. I got on the expressway, and let Barry drive while I changed clothes. We threw out all the clothes and shoes. A news flash came on the radio. It said a masked gang invaded the home of a wealthy pharmaceutical owner who was in Canada, the police had the entire area sealed off, and there would be an early arrest. Like shit. We were damn near to Chicago, and the expressway was filled with morning traffic.

I dropped Barry and Colin off on the south side. I decided to gamble. If the C.I.U. picked up my trail I would act nonchalant, they would never believe I had anything if I

was being that careless. I drove straight home, took the attache case in the house, showed Josie the jewels, drove straight out to Leo's and dropped off the case.

I received \$20,000 for the score three days later. I put the money in the glove compartment, and as I was going home a C.I.U. agent stopped me about a block from my house. He flat told me he wanted \$15,000 or he would put the Indiana robbery on me. I said, "Listen if I give you \$15,000 I don't want any more harrassment from any of you bastards. As far as I am concerned you can jam that Indiana score in your ass. You could never prove it." He knew I was telling the truth. Then I said, "Now, what makes you think I have or can get that much money?"

He said, "I know you have it, you're a jewel thief and you been making some good scores."

I said, "Again you are guessing. I am going to give you the fifteen grand, but if I ever get busted from the C.I.U. you are the first bastard I am blowing the whistle on." I pulled the twenty grand out of the glove compartment. He wanted the whole bundle, I said no way. I took out five grand and gave him the rest.

I couldn't figure out how he knew I had the money at that precise time. The only way he could possibly have known was if Rugendorf called him as soon as he paid me. The C.I.U. had my phone tapped, and there is no doubt they knew that the outfit was setting up my scores and getting the jewelry. But at no time was Rugendorf ever picked up or questioned. I don't believe the C.I.U. has ever made an outfit pinch. If it has, you can damn near make book nobody done any time.

I went back to Rugendorf, he was very sympathetic, the bastard. He said now they wouldn't bother me.

I talked with my wife, and she really let me know this

time that she didn't want me stealing. She said she didn't care if we never had a dime. That is the first time I fully realized I loved her. She was a really good girl, never ever any complaints, she accepted me as I was and still loved me.

Next day I told Rugendorf I was getting too hot and I was going to quit stealing. He threatened to kill me and my wife. He promised to run me through the meat-grinder at the packing plant. I knew the bastard would do it. Then he went over to the house and threatened Josie. She was deathly afraid. She said one look at him and you know he would kill all of us in a second. I told her to let me handle this my way. I knew I really had to get a lot of heat without going to prison. I set out to do just that.

10



Blowing a Score

The next score the outfit gave me was a newspaper publisher in a large city. When you read this book Mr. Publisher you will know it's the truth. But you will have to find out yourself how the outfit had this much information on you. I was showed a film of your home in Rugendorf's basement. Told the exact date you were coming back from your vacation. Told there would be no one but you and your wife in the house. And told that your wife had the jewelry rolled up in a velvet jeweler's bag.

I opened the back door, entered the house, walked in the bedroom, ran my hand under the pillow, found nothing, opened the drawer on the night-stand, took out a loaded 38 police special revolver, put it in my belt. I shone the pen-light in his eyes. He woke up. I let him reach his hand into the night stand. I said, "You will not find what you are looking for, friend. If it was there, you would have never got your hand in the drawer. If it was there, you would only create a big problem for the two of us. Because I have one too, and my gun is out and on you, and I would never lay it down or give it up. I only want the jewelry your wife has in the velvet bag, and then we will tie you up and be on our way. No one is hurt, the insurance company pays you, and everyone is happy." The lady told me where the jewelry was. I took it, tied them up, took their car, and left.

It started to look like the only way the C. I. U. could ever make a pinch was if I told them where I was going. There was one or two agents in the bar every night. I am not sure if they were fooling each other or trying to fool me.

Leo sent for me again. He showed me films of a mansion on a beautiful estate, the guy was a big wealthy attorney. It was a beautiful home, and whoever shot those pictures, it really looked to me like he had free run of the outside of the place. There was a tennis court and a swimming pool like in Hollywood. Barry and I went to get it. I was still doing a lot of juggling to get out of Chicago so no one could follow me.

It was no problem. I went in through a side-door, checked the downstairs, there was a baby formula in the refrigerator. I found the baby right off, next to the master bedroom. I went downstairs, heated the formula, tested to make sure it was not too hot, went back upstairs, and gave it to the baby. The baby had a wet diaper. I changed it. The little guy never said a word. He didn't give a damn who fed him and changed his diapers.

I went back in the master bedroom, started collecting what jewels I could find. I found a wall-safe in a closet in the bedroom, the round cylinder type, you have to knock off the cylinder and then punch it. There was no way I could do it without waking the people up. I went back in the other bedrooms and checked the children and the maid. She was sleeping on the other side of the house. I told Barry there was no sense waking up the maid, she could never hear nothing, and the children would sleep through anything.

I went back and woke up the people in the bedroom. This woman was no way in the least bit frightened. I said, "Honey I want you to open the safe."

She said, "You son-of-a-bitch. I suppose you want my virginity too."

I was a little taken back. I said, "Not tonight, I am only collecting jewelry and money."

She said she didn't know the combination, but her husband agreed to open it. While Barry took him to open it, I dumped her purse out on the bed. A book of Howard Johnson matches fell out. She said, "Say put those in your pocket, it's not bad enough you rob me, now you want me to get a divorce." I had to laugh. I put them in my pocket.

Barry came back with her husband. She said, "Why are you robbing us? The lady across the street has got more jewelry than me."

I said, "Well, we all have to make a living, and in case I get busted, I can always get your husband to defend me."

She said, "Yes, well with that asshole you would probably get life." She bummed a cigarette. Then she said, "Can I check on my baby?"

I said, "Sure, but now don't try to run and wake up everyone in the house."

She said she wouldn't. When she noticed the baby was changed and fed she said, "Hell, I know I wasn't asleep when I did that."

"I took care of that for you, you looked tired."

"Well his father never changes him. You know I like you, I wish you were not a burglar."

I said, "Honey we can't all be preachers or lawyers. I'll have to tie you up so we can get away."

"Will you do me a favor? I have two old minks in the closet, will you take them? He won't buy me any new ones, maybe the insurance company will."

I said, "that's a little out of my line, but I am going to take them and throw them away."

Now the guy wants to know if I will give him an inventory. I said, "Listen, just write down whatever you want to I'll take the blame. I won't even show up to dispute you."

She had to laugh. She said, "Oh hell let them tie us so we can get some sleep, all the kids will be in here about 6 o'clock in the morning."

I said, "Where are your car keys?"

She said, "Hey don't take my car. Take his, it's the Chrysler, and the keys are in a dish on the top of the refrigerator."

We tied them up and left. I never even read the papers to see what they said we stole but I have a feeling the insurance company took a screwing on that one.

I had put over a million dollars in the outfit's hands in just an eight month period. Everyone seems to think burglary or home invasions is an easy job and it does look easy. Lots of times I would take my wife and along the way we would stay at the best motels with room service, swimming pools. But I was spending easily a thousand dollars a week on the road, and in 1967 I went through three brand new Caddys, and a new Chrysler, the one I burned. The cars you have to be careful with. The F. B. I., C. I. U. and other police get photos of those cars and they pass them around the country. Soon everyone knows what you are driving and you will soon be dead or in jail forever. It was hard work.

Still the outfit wouldn't give me no rest. Now they wanted me to work the Chicago area again. I told them the minute one diamond is missing here they are going to know it's me, and there will be so much heat in the city you can't breathe. I said, "Look what happened when Mrs. Armour got taken for around \$300,000 in jewels." (I did not get her but I know who did.) "She didn't bother calling the police. She called the governor and *he* called the police."

But really I was glad they wanted this score in Chicago. I saw my chance to get out of the mob. I told my wife I was going to blow this score in Lincolnwood so maybe they would get rid of me. She was afraid I would go to prison or get killed. I said no way, I was going to let it fall right in Leo's lap and let him play with it.

Leo gave me the score, it was a wealthy Jewish woman that lived about three blocks from his house. Her husband owned a big drugstore, and she was always strolling around with \$100,000 worth of diamonds on. I told Leo how I was going to work it. I said I'd pick up the tools at his house. And I was not going to Indiana and bring the Lincoln down and drive around there, he'd have to get me another work car. I told him I'd come over and pick up the '64 Caddy I used to own from his house, he should leave the keys in it.

The greedy bastard went for the set-up. He didn't know he was going to get this dumped right in his lap. I was real anxious to see how the C.I.U. would handle this one, with Leo right in the middle. I told Barry we had a Chicago score. He said he thought we was not going to work Chicago. I said well this one is so easy I can't resist the temptation.

I knew these people didn't come home until about 1 o'clock. I wanted to get in the neighborhood and get set up. We went to Leo's and changed clothes, went out the back door, crossed one main intersection and got into the neighborhood. I opened the back door and went into the house, no one was home. Now I could have locked the back door and stayed in the house and gotten them when they came home. This is what Barry wanted to do, but I said no, we would wait outside. I didn't want him to know we were taking a pinch on this. If we stayed in the house then we would have had to take the jewelry, and I was not about to take a pinch with the stuff on me.

Barry wanted to cut the phone wires. I said no, they may want to call someone when they come home before they go to bed and they will notice it. The people came home at 1 o'clock sharp. As soon as they went in the house I told Barry let's go in. He said no let's wait till all the lights go out, and about an hour later we will go in. I said now. He wanted to cut the phone wires. I said no, someone may call. I couldn't tell him I was going to blow the score. (If I wanted to make that score I could have cut the phone wires and just kicked the door in, there would have been nothing they could have done about it, they would have been trapped in the house, as they couldn't call out.) I was making so god damn much noise on the back door I thought the son-of-a-bitch was deaf. Barry said, "What in the hell is wrong with you, you are fooling with that door like an amateur."

Finally the guy came in the kitchen and saw us both standing in the doorway. We were dressed in black with ski-masks. He started screaming, his wife come in the kitchen, she saw us now, both of them are just standing there screaming. Barry started to kick the door in. I pushed him out of the way. Even after they saw us we could have still scored the score, we could have kicked the door in and grabbed them before they ever got to a phone. But I told Barry, "Ok kid let's make it out of here, we blew this one."

We walked right down the street (of course we took off the ski-masks and unpinned the lapels on our black suits). There was no rush, Leo only lived three blocks away and it would take the cops time to get in. By the time they called the police, and the police took the name and address and gave it to the dispatcher, and he put it on the air, it would be twenty to thirty minutes before they started to roll in.

We strolled over to Leo's. I didn't bother waking him

up. I slipped the lock on his back door, set the case on his kitchen table, locked the door. I could have stayed at Leo's and never gotten a rumble, and if I did I had a perfect alibi, I was visiting.

I got in the '64 Caddy and reached up over the sun visor to get the keys. Barry said, "What the hell are you doing? This whole neighborhood is busy with cops. I am not driving out of here, let's stay right here."

I said, "Do as you like, I am leaving. Besides what can they do to us, we are clean." I liked Barry, I really wanted him to take the pinch. I figured it might save him.

I drove around the block once. Barry said, "You have been acting crazy all night, what are you doing?" I said I was trying to decide if we should go to Evanston or to Chicago. Do you know we was damn near out of the neighborhood before a squad pulled us over. The cop was in the squad by himself. He was so nervous I was afraid he was going to shoot us accidentally. I said, "Officer I am not going to run. Would you mind pointing you gun some other way?"

Barry had no I.D. whatsoever, and I had only a driver's license that said Donald Wilkey. When we got to the police station they asked some questions. I said, "Officer you will get no answers, my name is on my driver's license along with my address. Now either book me or turn me loose." They got a phony name from Barry. When they fingerprinted us they said we had to sign this card. I put a big X on the card and wrote "signed-under-protest." Boy that copper was mad. Barry done the same thing. They put us in their lockup.

Lincolnwood is a small station, you can hear everything they say. Some sargeant called in on the radio, said they had tore the neighborhood apart, but they

couldn't find no ski-masks, gloves, or burglar tools or guns. Another officer came in and said there was nothing anywhere in the Caddy. The guy on the desk said the stuff had to be somewhere, they couldn't eat it.

Then they brought us out and put us in a line-up with three or four other guys. Normally I would never have went in that line-up, I know my lawyer has to be present. The people came in and identified us immediately. They had been told what number in the line we were in. Of course there was no way they could really identify us, we had on ski-masks when we were at their home. But I was not concerned with their identification because it would go out the window in a court-room even if it was good. In Chicago you don't go to jail in a state court if you have money. You fix the case if it has to be fixed.

Now some copper came back to the cell and wanted to know if I knew Leo Rugendorf. I said no I was sorry I didn't. He said, "Well you are really in big trouble. He is an outfit guy, and you have stole his car."

I said, "What do you think he will do officer?"

He said, "He will probably kill you."

I dialed by wife, told her I had been detained, I'd be a little late getting home, would she drive out with some cigs and maybe five hundred? I said there was nothing to worry about, everything was going to be O.K. The copper said, "You think there's nothing to worry about when you have stole an outfit guy's car?" He put me back in the cell.

Twenty minutes later Leo was in the front office with his lawyer. They pulled us out of the cell so Leo could get a good look at us. They were really kissing Leo's ass, it was sickening. "Do you know these guys, Mr. Rugendorf?" He has to say no, or his ass gets booked on a conspiracy to attempt burglary. "Did you loan these guys your car?"

Again he has to say no. "Do you want to press charges Mr. Rugendorf?"

"Well I'll have to consult with my attorney."

"Don't worry Mr. Rugendorf, we will take care of these birds. You may take your car sir. I'll have one of the officers make sure they put the seats back. We had to search the car, these two birds had guns, the people have identified them." They put us back in the cell.

About twenty minutes later my wife and Charlotte pull up outside the station in my new Caddy convertible. She has clean clothes for me and she puts five hundred and some cigs on the desk. She says, "I would like to leave this for Donald Wilkey."

Now they really figure they will get some information. "Who is Donald Wilkey to you?"

"A friend."

"Who shall I say left it?"

"A friend. Unless I am under arrest officer I am not answering any questions, and if I am arrested, I still have no answers. May I see him."

They let her. I tell her, "Find out where I am going to be arraigned, be in court, and don't put up any bond money, lean on you know who, tell him we are broke."

Soon as she left I could hear them talking out in front. "I sure as hell would like to know who those two bastards are, those two broads just left here driving a new Caddy, and they both know the routine like it's been drilled into them. I bet they know their constitutional rights better than we do." Little did they know how right they were. Some copper came in and said, "I don't know where they hid that shit but we can't find nothing in that neighborhood." Someone piped up and said, "Listen, you know if those guys really do know Leo, he could have that stuff." Some

real asshole said, "No, I asked him, he said no and he let me look in his garage. I thought they may have left it there cause they stole his car."

Then in a few minutes the guy on the desk said, "Jesus Christ look at this, see who these guys are. The C.I.U. is on the way out here right now." I guess they had gotten our prints or mugshots back from downtown. The guy came running back to our cell, he said, "I know who you are."

I said, "Yeah, I am real proud of you. I'll bet they'll make you a plainclothes man for this." He left mad as hell.

Bill Hardeman of the C.I.U. walked up in front of my cell, he said, "Do you know who I am?"

I said "Personally Mr., I don't give a fuck who you are."

"I am Bill Hardeman, none of your friends ever told you about me?"

"Now that I think of it they have, they said you were a real prick."

He walked away, a cop comes up. "Mr. Hardeman and Mr. Marciano want to talk to you." I figured good, they have a reputation for beating prisoners. I'll see if I can provoke an ass-whipping, and I will go right out on bond and file a lawsuit.

When they got me in the back room Hardeman and Marciano were there with a couple of other agents. Of course Marciano had to play the gangster role. "I am Marciano, you have heard of me?"

"No, as a matter of fact I never have, as the police department does not hire too many Puerto Ricans."

"I will have you know I am Italian."

"Well I am really pleased to meet you, you wop son-of-a-bitch." I thought he was going to choke.

"I would like to be in one of those houses when you walk in. I would kill you."

“Fine,” I said, “let’s you and I get a very firm understanding while we have the opportunity. As far as the house is concerned, that is the last fucking place you would ever want to be, cause no matter what happens I think I can live just long enough to get off a few shots. I will not ever under no conditions ever take a pinch in anyone’s house. Get killed, yes. But a pinch never. Now one other thing. Did anyone ever tell you that fucking, shooting, and killing goes both ways? I’ve done eleven years in prison for something I never done. And no greasy motherfucker like you is ever going to send me back.”

At that time I meant those exact words.

All they could say was they were going to send me to prison on what they had right there. I said, “Let me tell you what you have. Shit. I am going home. If I can’t beat this rap I will fix it. Now you take the stolen car and the attempted burglary and shove them both up your ass Mr. Tough Cop.” I got up and walked back to my cell. That was my one and only interview with the C.I.U. But not my last involvement by a long shot.

They took me to court, the judge set bond at \$25,000. \$25,000 for a bullshit rap like this is sky-high. I said, “Why not make the bond \$50,000?” The judge said, “O.K. \$50,000.” (I wanted that asshole to know no matter what he made it I was coming out.) The next day Leo Rugendorf and Tony came to the jail. Leo had Tony post the bond in his name. He wanted to know what happened. I said I just blew the score. I went home and took a bath.

When I was getting ready to go down to the lawyer’s office, I looked for my watch and ring. They were gone. I asked Josie where was my watch and ring? She said Leo had come and got them, he had to have them to make bond money for me. I went out to his house. I was mad as hell. I threw the bond money at him. I told him to get my watch

and ring. He said he had pawned them to make the bond, he would get them. He left and was back in ten minutes. I know he had them in his pocket all along.

He went with me to see the lawyer. When we got down there I had to pay the fee. As we were leaving I said, "Leo, if I would have been broke, I would have been in bad shape. You were supposed to come up with the bond money and the lawyer's fees. I came up with both. So I am hooked up with the wrong team."

"Oh no," he said, "I am going to straighten this out, I'll see you get the bond money back."

I said, "Why not, as being it's mine? And what about the attorney?"

"Oh, we will straighten that out."

Two weeks later I went to court in Evanston. The victims were there, but this time they couldn't identify us. They were mistaken they said, it wasn't us. I knew what had happened, the outfit went to them. When you and the two burglars appear in court you had better be blind, have amnesia, and loss of memory. Or else. The attempted burglary was dismissed, I was still out on \$50,000 bond on car theft.

The lawyer got the case transferred from Evanston into Chicago. Barry was still in jail on \$50,000 bond. I told Leo to pull the kid out. He said, "No I told you in front I am not taking care of anybody but you, I don't care what happens to him." I said, "Yes but you never took care of me." He said, "Those people didn't identify you, did they? And you won't go to jail on no stolen car." I said, "I hope not, I never stole one." He blew his stack, said, "You keep your mouth shut or I'll kill you. Let me handle this." I said, "OK you handle it, but now you tell me, how do I steal without a partner?"

Charlotte was on my ass constantly to pull Barry out. I told her I didn't have the money. I couldn't tell her I was through stealing, that I was forcing the outfit to let me go. I thought so anyway.

Leo called me to the grocery store at 37th and Indiana. He wanted the work car back, the Lincoln I had in Indianapolis. He was really mad. He said, "If you keep fucking around you wind up in the meat-grinder." I said, "What the hell do you want me to do? Go out and get killed or caught and get a million years? One of the C.I.U. is around constantly. There is also a beeper on my car."

He said, "Fuck the C.I.U. I'll take care of them." I said, "Good you can start by getting my fifteen grand back and while you're at it get Freddy's fifteen grand back. He is dead, but I am sure Edna can use it."

He said, "Get out of here before I kill you." I started to leave. He screamed, "Come back here, you and me and Tony have to go get the Lincoln." We drove up to Indianapolis and picked it up.

I went out south and paid cash for all new barbershop equipment, three new chairs, and a back-bar. I rented a large building in the Northwest Suburbs in Norwood Park on the Northwest highway. I had all the equipment moved in, and contracted to panel and remodel the place. I was putting in a brand new barber shop. Leo found out about the barber shop and said if I built it he'd burn the motherfucker to the ground if the whole block had to go. I told him I had to have a front and make a living.

That night a shooting took place in the F & Z lounge. Johnny King shot four hillbillies, none seriously. He couldn't get to his car, so I had Norma get him out of there in her convertible. She was a hooker, she worked in an outfit whore-house in Milwaukee. An hour later the place

was swarming with cops. They were trying to interrogate me. I said I don't know who the guy was, he was just a customer at the bar. Some pimple-face homicide cop kept threatening me about taking me in and closing the joint up. I got mad. I said, "Listen punk, go fuck yourself. I never shot anybody, now take me in and I'll be out in ten minutes. And as for the joint, the licenses are not in my name. I stole the fucking money to buy it with, and I don't care what you do with it. I have already got my money back, I was thinking about burning the fucking dump down anyway to collect the insurance. Now either get the fuck out of here or start making some pinches. Don't ask me to do your god damn job for you, that's what they pay you \$40 a week for. You go out and catch the guy or else put me on the payroll and I will catch him for you." The copper was so mad he would have shot me if there wasn't a crowd of people. What could he pinch me for? If he did I'd be out in twenty minutes.

About an hour later, one of the petty larceny cops came over from the 14th district. He said, "Listen, I got this phone-book before they booked it in. It belongs to Norma, they have her over at the station." I said, "What the hell good is the phone-book to me? There is nothing in there that can hurt me." He said to take a look through it. I saw Milwaukee Phil's home number in there. I don't know to this day what she was doing with it. I gave him a C note to forget about it.

Next day at the bar Josie came over, she said Leo wanted me to call right away. I went home and called him. He said to come out to his house, he had some stag films. I said, "For what, what the hell I want to see that junk for?" He said I'd want to see these.

I went out to Leo's. He ran off a front view and a side-

view of a two story home with a big lawn. He said, "Can you get in this house?"

I said, "I can get in any house, but you know I don't want to work the Chicago area."

"This is not the Chicago area, and I'll tell you why you want to get in this house. This man is one of the most wealthiest men in the state of Colorado. He lives in Denver. He has a very expensive jade collection and some valuable paintings. And his wife has a 6 karat emerald cut diamond. Be sure and get the jade, paintings, and the ring."

I said, "As much heat as there is, what happens if I get busted out there?"

"Don't worry," he said, "we got people who will take care of it." He wrote down a name and a phone number on a piece of paper. I asked who was this guy? He said, "That is Jesus Christ as far as you are concerned if you get busted." He handed me Temple Buell's name and address on a piece of paper. He said, "Try to memorize those names and numbers. Whoever you work with, don't let them know you already have the score, just act like you're looking for one."

The next day I bought out Hank Salvano's share and gave the tavern to my brother. I knew Hank was a small time burglar. When I asked him did he want a chance to make some big money, he jumped at it. He called Johnny King, and twenty minutes later King met me in the restaurant at Pulaski and North. I told him he was going to need money to fix that shooting beef. If he wanted to work I could knock that beef out of the box. He was all for it. I got ahold of Leo and had him take care of it.

Josie picked up the tools and guns from Leo's house and brought them home in a shopping bag. I put a suitcase and the tools in the car. I know the C.I.U. was really happy

I was going to work. They had the beeper on my car, they were really going to follow me. I picked up King and Salvano. They wanted to know where we were going. I said, "What does it matter as long as you make money?" I was thinking with two amateur burglars, I'd really have to be on my toes on this one.

When we got into Iowa, I pulled into a roadside restaurant. The wait was not too long, the C.I.U. pulled right in. If they wanted a pinch they had one right there. I was out of the state on a \$50,000 bond, and I had guns and burglar tools in the car. But they really wanted to catch me working so they could kill me.

I paid the bill and jumped out ahead of them. I was taking a bad chance on a pinch, driving over a hundred miles per hour. I got into Des Moines, Iowa, pulled up a block from the bus station, took the beeper off the Caddy, went into the station, and stuck it in the luggage compartment of a Greyhound bus loading for Kansas City. Then I headed for Denver. (Later on one of the C.I.U. agents told the F.B.I. they lost me in Iowa. I will lay a million to one odds they never told the F.B.I. how they lost me or how far they followed the Greyhound bus before they found out what they were following.) We drove straight through, changing over drivers.

Once in Denver we slept, and then went to a shopping center. We all three bought crepe sole shoes. I inquired of a clerk if he knew a Temple Buell. He said he knew of him but not where he lived. I started that conversation in order to make Salvano and King think that I didn't know exactly where I was going to hit.

We took a drive by the Buell residence. Only I knew he lived there. It was going to really be a tough neighborhood to get in and out of. I couldn't find a set-up for parking

anywhere. I figured I would take them on a dry-run into a neighborhood that night, but not commit any crime. Working with two amateurs is really dangerous. One mistake and you're all busted or killed.

The district we went into was heavily patrolled. I opened up a door, went in, took some cakes from a refrigerator, it was hot out. I locked the door back. Salvano was extremely nervous. He would never make a cat burglar, he was good at beating his wife. I knew I would never be able to use him. King I could train.

Salvano drove us into the neighborhood and we rolled out. We were in, with only one way out, a car. We put on the ski masks, pinned up the lapels on our black suits, put on black gloves. I said, "King, stay close to me, and do exactly as I do or as I tell you. Once we get in that house talk as little as possible, don't ever let any names slip. I'll call you number one, you call me number two."

We got up close to the residence. I had to push King flat on the ground and damn near hold him there. A squad pulled up in the drive, flashed the spot light around and drove off. King was ready to run. I said, "Lay still you idiot, if you run, you're busted, they will see the movement. Laying still you blend in with the dark, they don't know you're near this house."

I checked the front door, the kitchen door leading in from the garage, and the other side of the house. My best way in was the French windows because I could keep an eye on the master bedroom from there. A woman was setting right in front of them watching late T.V. She finally went upstairs about 1:30. I waited. I checked my watch, it was 2:45. I felt she had sufficient time to fall asleep. I checked out the French windows. There was an old-fashioned lock on them, you can't slip that type of lock from the outside. I

had King stand in real close to me and screen me with his coat. I lit the butane torch, placed it against the window in several places. I shut the torch off, put it back in the attache case, took out a roll of tape, put one long strip down, left one end dangling for a hand hold, taped the window up and down and across, pulled on the tape, the broken glass came out without a sound. I reached through and unlocked the door. No sound. We went back in front and checked to make sure no squads were coming in. I said, "I am going to check that house out. No matter what happens, if a squad pulls up in that driveway don't panic or run. *If* and only *if* the cops start to come into the house, shoot high over their heads. And don't run, lay flat on the ground, don't worry they will get out of here and get on the radio for reinforcements. If you run you will never get out of this neighborhood."

I went into the house, checked the downstairs. I found the jade collection and the paintings. I went upstairs, there were four people in the house. I slipped into the master bedroom and eased the bed covers back. Mrs. Buell had on the large diamonds. I warmed my hand, put it over hers, and tried to ease the ring off. She didn't move but it was too tight, it wouldn't come off. I would have to wake her up. I went back down the stairs and said, "King, now I am going to bring you in. Step exactly in my tracks."

I closed the drapes in the bedroom and shined the penlight in their eyes. I told them, "Now I am going to turn on the lights, we are dressed in black but don't be alarmed it's only so you can't identify us." I flipped the light switch, handed her a robe. While King watched them I woke up the other two ladies and brought them into the master bedroom. I said, "Mrs. Buell I'll have to have your ring."

She said, "It's only a zircon."

I took one look at her hand, I knew it was a diamond and worth at least \$10,000 if not more.

She said, "I can't get it off."

I said, "I am really sorry about that, I'll have to cut your finger off." She had that ring off in about two seconds.

Would I have cut her finger off? *No*. It would never be necessary. I only want the diamond, not the mounting, and I always have a pair of wire cutters, the needle-nose type. I can clip the band, or take the diamond out of the mounting on her hand, or I can always wrap the finger with thread or string and get it off. She would never have lost her finger, but she was going to lose the diamond.

We rounded up the rest of the jewelry and almost two thousand in cash. King unbeknown to me threw Mr. Buell's wallet in the pillow case along with his credit cards and \$2,500 worth of traveler's checks. I would have never took those items from the residence, they are positive I.D. in case of a pinch. I did not take the jade or the paintings, I was not about to drive from Denver to Chicago with that stuff in my trunk.

I locked the Buells in the linen closet, ripped out two telephones, went down and got in their car, a 1964 Caddy. I told King to listen real close. I was going to tell him only once. "I am driving straight into the motel with this car. I am leaving you and the attache case in this car. I'll go get Salvano. We will come down and get in our Caddy. You will pull out and drive straight down the street out in front of the motel. I'll fall right in behind you. Drive down about twenty blocks, turn into a neighborhood and park the car, get out with the attache case and just walk normal down to

the end of the block and turn the corner. I'll drive in and pick you up, that way no one can see you get out of one car and into another one, and maybe take our license number. If a squad should accidentally stop you, run for it. I'll stop him. I'll pull right in front of him. We are clean in my Caddy, the best he can charge me with is an accident or some other minor shit, and you're on your way." But we didn't have any trouble, and we got out of there just like I planned.

When we got near Chicago I called Leo at the pay phone we had set up. He said to come on in with the stuff, he couldn't get a hold of anyone right then. I said, "Listen, I don't like this shit, do you know the C.I.U. followed me out of the city?" He said, "Screw them, I'll handle that end of it. Meet me at Febos Italian Restaurant on Western."

I had to take a chance, I didn't have much choice. I drove to Febos, saw Leo's car out in front. I parked on a side street and walked in. Leo and his bodyguard Tony were in there. Leo said, "Did you get the stuff?"

I said, "Not the paintings and jade, I couldn't find them."

He said, "You motherfucker, I am going to kill you yet. You yellow son of a bitch, why don't you say you're afraid?"

I turned the jewelry over to him, dropped off King and Salvano and went home.

Next day when I was driving out to Leo's, 3 C.I.U. cars crowded me into the curb. The agents all had their guns out. They said, "Well if it ain't the fox. Get against the car with your hands up or we will kill you right here." People from the streets were standing around. One of the agents looked the Caddy over, said, "Looks like you been on a long trip." I didn't answer, I knew he was full of shit. That Caddy had just been washed down. They handcuffed me

between two agents and put me in an unmarked car. Another agent drove my Caddy.

At the 14th district station, they took me upstairs, strip-searched me. I had \$18, a phony driver's license, and a phone book. The book had Phil's number, Leo's, Joe Gags', and a few others. When they gave my stuff back the phone-book was missing. They left one agent with me. I asked him if I could call my lawyer. He said, I might as well wait, he didn't see how they could book me. I told him I'd be willing to pay a couple hundred to get my phone book back. He said he'd see what he could do, I should meet him in the restaurant on Lawrence by my house at 8 o'clock in the morning. I figured if he said meet him then, he must know they were not going to book me.

About two hours later they released me. I went out to the Caddy, they had tore it apart, and I knew they had bugged it again. I was really too tired to care cause I was certain I would never use it on another score. So they could just follow it around Chicago. I called Leo and told him what happened. He said to not worry about it, he'd bring me some money tomorrow.

I went home. Josie said, "The C.I.U. was here, they tore the house apart, and they took the phone book. And they took a thousand dollars from under the rug, but I noticed it was missing and told them so, and they gave it back like it was a joke. They looked at the 45 in the bedroom but never took it." I asked if they showed her a search warrant? She said no. I asked her what room they kept everyone out of the longest. She said the kitchen. I took the kitchen phone apart with a table knife, they had tapped it. I was going to take the tap off, but then I thought the hell with it, I never say anything on that phone I don't want them to know.

I went to see the lawyer. I told him about the house

search, the car search, the bug. He said, "Did you ever see a warrant?" I said no. He said, "Don't worry about it. The search was illegal and so is the phone tap."

Leo came over the next morning about 7 o'clock. He gave me an envelope and said, "Here is five grand."

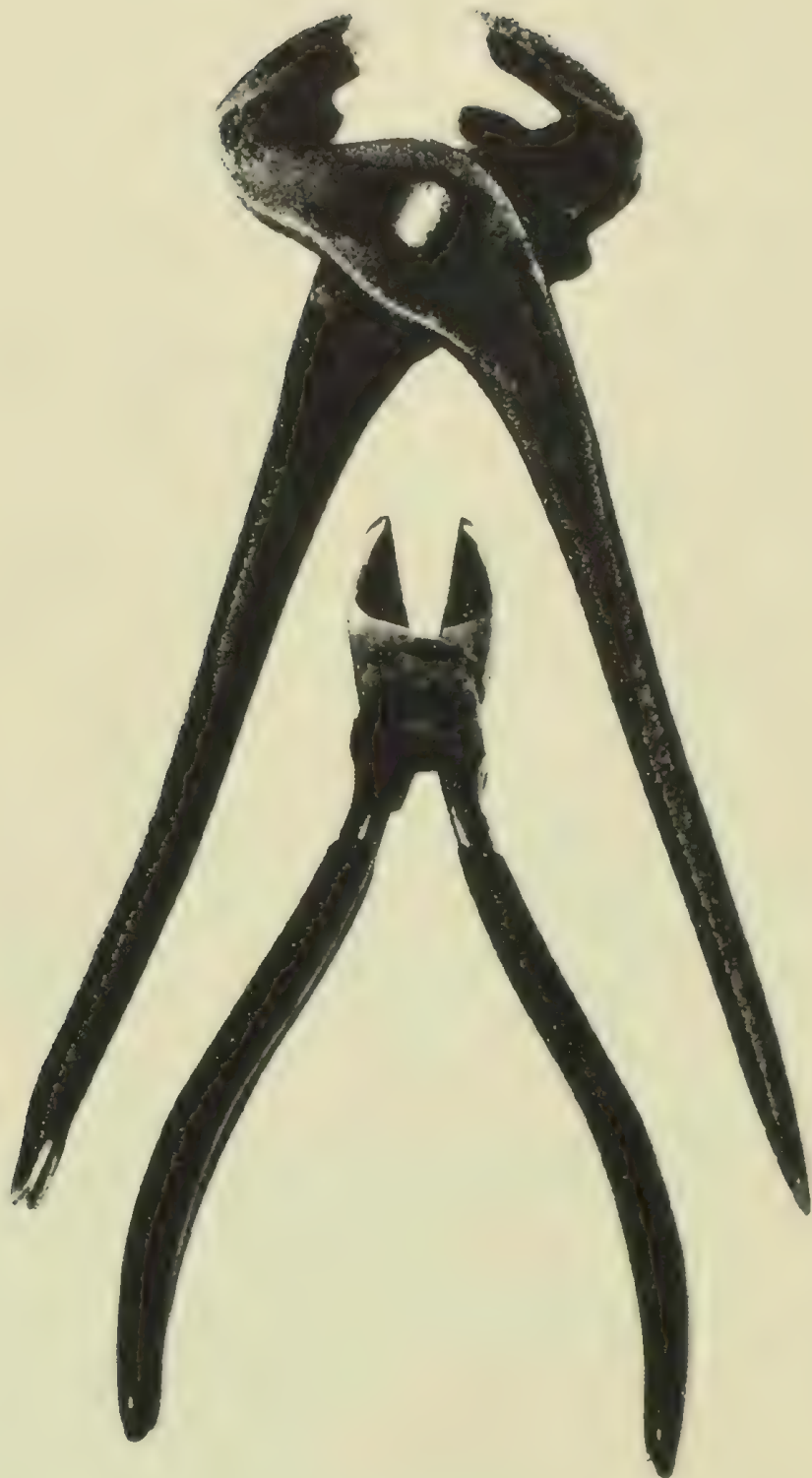
I said, "Five grand? Leo, the newsflash I heard coming out of Denver said \$57,000."

He said, "Yeah I know. They were wrong, there wasn't that much."

"That score had to be over \$57,000! I looked at all that jewelry good coming back."

He said, "Listen you son-of-a-bitch, don't tell me what I got, you take what I give you. When you get money you don't want to work. I'll keep you broke so you have to work." Then he threatened me and Josie and left.

11



On The Run

Josie was terrified of Leo, and I was afraid myself. I told her the only thing we might be able to maybe do was disappear out of Chicago and change our names. Cause they would never let me quit stealing. If I did, they would kill me because I knew too much. I was the only one of the burglars who could put them in prison. She asked what I was going to do with the new barber shop. I said we would sell it or just leave it set.

That morning I met the cop in the restaurant. I gave him two hundred and got my phonebook back. I figured they had photostated it anyway. I went out to the barber shop. They almost had it finished, it was really a beautiful shop. I didn't figure I would ever get it open.

A few days later Leo sent for me again. He said, "I'll tell you what you better do. Take that King guy out and kill him, he even looks wrong to me. I'll go with you and we make fertilizer out of him." I said, "What's wrong with you? Are you crazy? The kid is all right." He said, "Well don't ever bring that bastard around me ever again." I was thinking you bastard, you'll never hold a murder rap over me.

Then I thought to myself maybe I will come out better just point blank telling them this is it, no more stealing. Josie and I were packed and ready to move, but I hated to

leave everything I had built up in Chicago behind. So I took a chance and told him. He went crazy. He threatened to kill me, frame me, de-nut me, about everything else he could think of, and he was still screaming when he left.

Then a couple of days later he calls, nice as anything and says, "Listen get this one more score, and you can quit. I understand your problem. The score is in Northfield, Ill., the guy is either the President or Vice President of Sears." I said no I would not steal in the Chicago area, it was too much heat. Then he pushed for another score in Barrington, Ill. I turned him down again. Finally he tells me about a millionaire named Owens, the Owens of Owens glassware, who has a city named after him in Illinois. I said, "I'll make this score Leo, but this is the last one, you can do what ever you have to when I come back."

Course I knew this was too easy, this whole thing smelled sky high. Leo had decided to kill me and he was going to get the C.I.U. to do the job for him. But I had a better idea. This was going to be my chance to get out of the mob for good. The problem was to get out, but not killed.

King and I picked up the guns and attache case at the wrecking yard. As I was walking out of the yard with the case, two C.I.U. agents turned the corner, they damn run over me as I was crossing the street. They were so embarrassed they didn't know what to do, they had to go in the foundry again. There is no doubt they knew what was in the case, but they didn't want to arrest me, they had orders to kill me. When I noticed the agents, I said nothing to King, I didn't want to scare him off. I just figured we was going to have company this trip.

Owens, Ill. is about 350 miles from Chicago, almost on the St. Louis, Mo. line, between Alton and Edwardsville. I pushed King's Ford real hard, 90 and 100 miles per hour.

So that means the C.I.U. had to push too. We never picked up a ticket all the way on Route 66.

Just outside of Alton I shot into a gas station and put King under the wheel. We filled up, and as we pulled out, there was the C.I.U. They had to go by. Now we were trailing them. I told King pass that car. He did. I had King stop at a drug store, I ran in and bought four rolls of tape, and when I came out I spotted the C.I.U. again. I slid back under the wheel.

I had Owens' address. I found the street and drove through the neighborhood. They followed me through.

I decided to give them another real good chance to make a pinch. I drove into St. Louis. Now I was across the state line with guns and burglar tools. I was also out of the state on a \$50,000 dollar bond. They could have made a pretty costly pinch right there. They didn't do anything.

We checked into a motel in St. Louis. I let King sign us in. Soon as we hit the room I eased the drapes back and watched the front office. I was sure they wouldn't check into the same motel. God damn if they didn't pull in. I thought now either they are crazy or they think I am just too dumb to know any better. Soon as they got in the room I told King we were going to eat right quick. We ran and jumped in the car and pulled out real fast, here they come.

I went to the most expensive restaurant I could find, a place called Sherwood Forest. I ordered filet mignon. In they come. (I wonder how they liked their bill. It doesn't really matter, the tax payers pick it up.) I couldn't believe this, this was worse than Sherlock Holmes. Soon as they sat down and ordered I jumped up and left. I don't know how they managed that one. I went to the motel and went to bed.

If the outfit hadn't been pushing so hard I would have

got up the next morning and drove back to Chicago. But I figured now was the time to play this all the way out to a bust. We got up the next morning, drove out to a shopping center and bought shoes. I met the C.I.U. out there. I never paid any attention to them the rest of the day. I don't think they stayed too close, because I am almost positive they knew exactly where I was going to hit. I thought boy if they stake out the house they are due for a surprise.

I started driving over that night. On the Ill. side I shot into a gas station. Sure enough they stumbled up on us again. I had to pass them on the highway. I pulled over and set up the parking for the neighborhood. Again they were so over-anxious they almost run me down when I crossed the street. I walked off and watched them turn the corner, and soon as they did, I run back, jumped in our car and pulled it right up in a family's garage. We sat there for about 20 minutes. They had lost us, they were running up and down the streets.

King said, "What in the hell are you doing?" I said I was checking something out. Just about that time a man stepped out of the house and walked over to the garage. He said, "May I ask what you want?" I said I was sorry, I thought Mr. Morgan lived here. I backed out, and drove through the neighborhood. A local squad picked us up. I started speeding to give him a chance to make a pinch. He wouldn't make it, so now I knew the local police were alerted. I stopped. The cops became confused, they had to pass me or tip off their hand. They passed acting nonchalant. I made an illegal U turn and watched in my rear view while they made one. They turned off their lights and stayed back. I shot off, lost them and set up parking about 1 mile from the original parking. King and I got out and waited in the shrubbery for about an hour a block from the

car. Two guys walked up to the Ford and peered inside. They then raised the hood of the car and did something under the hood for about three minutes. King never noticed it, he was sitting on the ground smoking a cig cupped in his hand so no one could see any fire.

I was not about to get too close to his house for one single reason. Hardeman's C.I.U. was not ever going to set me up like they did Bill Epilito. They got a tip Epilito was going into a home up on the North Side in Chicago. They staked out the house, and when Epilito opened the door he never stood a chance. They blew him to pieces. I doubt if he was ever asked to surrender. One thing is certain, he is not around to dispute anything, he died on the spot. I made up my mind right then, when I read about Epilito in the paper, I was not ever going to take a beating from any C.I.U. agent even if I went to the chair, got life or killed. I changed guns that day from a 38 to a 45, and I always had two of them. I figure no matter what happened, I can live long enough to kill one C.I.U. agent.

Now I had to tell King. I said, "King, here's the story. I feel you have a right to know this, it's your car down there, you're going to catch a lot of weight and pressure. I am almost sure your car won't start when we get back. If we can get to St. Louis we will report it stolen, or I'll pay a lawyer to come and get it." King said, "Why all the mystery?" I said, "Kid the C.I.U. has been following us all the way since the minute we left Chicago. This whole neighborhood and the car is staked out." King said I was nuts. I said, "I may well be. But you have not saw a patrol in here all night. They have pulled out the patrol. They pulled it out so nothing would scare us from working." King said, "Maybe you're right, let's go back and see what happens."

I took the small leather case I had inside the attache

case, found a flower bed and buried it. It held over a thousand dollars' worth of locksmith tools I had collected over the years. I sure didn't want to lose them, too much trouble to get them back together. I could always come back and get this set.

I let King carry the case. I put one 45 in the waistband of my pants, the other in my coat pocket. When we got to the car I laid the 45 in my pocket on the seat, the other I kept in my waist. King tried to start the car. It wouldn't start.

All of a sudden the whole neighborhood lit up like broad daylight, there were about 50 cops, the car was completely surrounded. They hollered for us to back out with our hands up. I left the 45 in my waistband, and got out of the car. I could still get the 45 if any shooting started.

The C.I.U. were the first ones to run up to the car. They started beating King and I with shotguns and pistols. King's eye was busted open. The C.I.U. found the loaded 45 with one jacked in the chamber on the front seat, they pulled the other 45 out of my belt with one jacked in the chamber. They said to the local sheriff, "See we told you this motherfucker is a killer."

The sheriff told the C.I.U., "Stop beating those prisoners." He said, "I told you before we come out here if these men wanted to surrender there would be no beatings or killings in my town. We don't kill people down here unless we have to." The C.I.U. were still screaming and hollering, "Where is the jewelry?" "What house is the victims tied up in?" "Where's the money and jewelry?" King and I both remained silent. The C.I.U. tried to beat us again, the sheriff said "Keep your hands off those two men, I don't mean to tell you again."

Now the C.I.U. were trying to force King and I into

their car. But the sheriff really moved in and took over, he said, "My men will take charge of these prisoners." The sheriff personally put us in one of his own deputy's cars, and they took us to the county jail at Edwardsville.

The sheriff had stopped the C.I.U. from killing us. If it was not for the sheriff, I am sure King and I would be dead. I am sure the streets would have been turned into a gun battle, cause the C.I.U. are famous for their ambushes and death traps.

We got to the station. I had no I.D. but a phony driver's license. I went through the normal booking procedure. I refused to identify myself or answer any questions. I was booked under the name of Donald Wilkey. The C.I.U. were still convinced we had robbed someone. The local police and C.I.U. went over the entire area, they tried to find a door or window or anything that had been opened or even had marks on it. They came up with nothing. Charges were placed against us, possession of burglar tools, illegal possession of firearms, but they couldn't place even an attempted burglary charge. The C.I.U. had struck out on their murder rap because of the sheriff who had stopped that ball game.

I called my wife, she said she'd be down with the bond money. I told her to go to Leo, let him come up with every penny. She went to Leo, he threatened to kill her and me if she came back. I called him from the jail. He just point blank told me get screwed, he was not doing anything. That was beautiful, just exactly what I wanted to hear. Now was my chance to come out from under the outfit.

Now I had to beat the raps, and I was not about to hire an outfit lawyer. I had Josie sell the new Caddy and the new barber shop. She moved to Edwardsville. We were out of Chicago. Now to come out from under the outfit.

I talked with Attorney Robert Trone in Edwardsville. I laid it on the line. I said, "Listen, I was involved pretty deeply with the outfit, but now is my chance to pull completely out without getting killed. As long as I don't have to turn to them for help." Mr. Trone said that after his several conversations with me, he believed I was sincere.

The C.I.U. were really pushing now. They knew I had moved out of Chicago, for all times, and they knew they had blew their one and only chance to kill me. (Unless they drove up on the streets and murdered me.) The C.I.U. picked up Charlotte and she went through all-day interrogation. They picked up Henry Salvano next day, and Hank got the works. I think Hank done a little talking, but he didn't really know that much, so he couldn't do much harm. The C.I.U. were hitting blank walls every way they turned. Then they instituted a warrant be filed from Denver on the Temple Buell robbery. Any information Hardeman sent out there had to be a lie or hearsay, as he didn't know anything. Another warrant was leveled against me from Alton, Ill. for the \$40,000 robbery of some people named Watson I had never heard of.

But now Mr. Trone went to work. The Watson robbery was knoked out of the box, lack of identification. The burglary tools were knocked out of the box, entrapment and illegal search and seizure. When the C.I.U. had lifted the hood of the car and took out the coil wire, that entrapped the car, on a public street, and they had sufficient time to get a warrant before and after the arrest. Then they tried to get me for illegal possession of a firearm under the five year felony law. But I had not been convicted of a felony in the past five years. I called a lawyer in Chicago, he had a writ issued. I was returned to Chicago, the case was nolle processed, Barry was released, and I was returned to

Edwardsville under a \$50,000 bond on the Denver case. The C.I.U. had been to bat four times on four cases, and they struck out four times. Now Mrs. Buell and a detective named Miller flew in from Denver. I was called into a room where they both looked at me through a one-way mirror. Mr. Trone found out about it. He rushed over and broke up that game fast. I was taken over to the court house, and Mrs. Buell and the detective were trying to view me from the hallway. Mr. Trone got up and stood in front of me.

The next thing Mr. Trone tells me I have been identified in the Denver robbery. He said, "I don't like this whole case, something really smells fishy here. Did you ever see or talk to Detective Miller?" I said I never saw or talked to him in my life. "How could they identify you?" I told him they could not have identified me, impossible. I showed him a newspaper article where Mrs. and Mr. Buell stated both burglars and gunmen were wearing masks and gloves.

Mr. Trone questioned me thoroughly. He said, "We are not going to worry about the identification, it's illegal as hell anyway. But why does the C.I.U. hate you so bad?" So I told him about the \$15,000 pay off I had once made to a C.I.U. agent and that I had told him I would blow the whistle on him.

Then some of the sheriff's deputies and the sheriff came and talked to me. They didn't like the case at all. Someone, somewhere was pushing too hard. The C.I.U. was always calling the sheriff and telling him how to run his office. So the sheriff told them, "Looks like you have enough problems with the crime in Chicago. The people here elected me, and until they remove me from office I'll run this county."

I made a phone call to Buster Wortman, East Side

Racket Boss in St. Louis, the guy I had sold my first diamond to. I said, "Buster I need a favor. I don't want any strings attached, nor do I want to be under any obligations or owe any favors." He asked what it was. I said, "I want to quit stealing and I need a little help with the bond." He said, "You are actually squaring up?" I said I was. Buster said, "There will be a guy there the first thing in the morning. He used to work for me, and he is now retired."

Buster's word was good, a guy was there the next morning at 9 o'clock sharp. He called me out to the visiting room. He said, "Do you know me?"

I said, "Mr. I never saw you before in my life."

"I understand you're a top flight jewel thief."

"I was."

"Good, that's what I wanted to hear. I am an old man, and I know that no matter how much you make, you wake up some day and you know it's not really worth it. I heard your name a million times before I ever knew you existed."

"How could you have ever heard of me, I never saw you before in my life?"

He said, "I once knew a jewel thief who put you all to shame. He was never caught with a burglar tool and never took a burglary pinch. He was Oklahoma Smith, the same guy who taught you the business."

I hadn't heard that name in years.

We went over to court and I got the bond cut in half. The old man put it up, and I was on the streets. I went over and talked to the sheriff. I said I wanted to find a job and go to work until this case was over, and I might want to live here. He said he'd see if he could find me a job, and I could live here as long as I liked. But as a citizen not a thief. I said that was good enough. The C.I.U. was going goofy.

I called Rugendorf, I said I was on the streets. He

asked when I was coming back to Chicago. I said I never was, I was through stealing. Leo said, "You better come to Chicago, as there is more ways than one to get something done."

I said, "Listen, if you really want to know something I think you and Phil tipped off the C.I.U. I am going to wait and fight as long as possible without you. But you were supposed to take care of all this kind of action, and you are either going to spend the legal fees as was promised on me, or you are going to have to spend them on yourself."

Leo said, "I'll tell you this, you ain't going to need any help much longer."

I said, "Go fuck yourself," and hung up.

I talked with Mr. Trone. For the past three weeks he could see something was wrong. He was in the law books constantly. A few days before I was going to court the old man who went my bond died. I had not even had a chance to go over and talk to him. I really wanted to know everything he knew about Okie. I made a long distance phone call to Chicago to a criminal lawyer. I told him the guy who went my bond just died. What was the score? He said at the moment I was technically not under any bond. They could pick me up and put me in jail. I asked what if I was to just leave. Would the state be able to collect the bond from the guy's estate? He said he didn't see how, but he was only giving me an interpretation, it was something that would have to be argued in court. I hung up.

I think Mr. Trone knew I was getting ready to leave. He said "Whatever you do, don't leave. I think I have found the way out of this case."

I said, "I don't see how with the C.I.U. and the outfit both pushing this case."

He said, "Screw the outfit and the C.I.U."

I talked with my wife. I said I was leaving. She didn't want no part of it. She said, "You're not ever going to get any place running, you have started the fight, now finish it."

I said, "Listen, I have stole over a million dollars in the last few months, and not only has the outfit got all of that, but also what little they have paid me for stealing they have got back one way or the other. We are broke."

She said, "If you are bound and determined, go ahead. You have to live with yourself. But as much as I love you, if you ever steal again, I'll leave you."

"Will you come later?"

"Only and I mean only, if you can prove to me you have worked every day for six months."

I said, "all right."

She said, "I'll move back to Chicago. How will you find me?"

I said, "I'll find you, leave that to me."

Next morning I was gone. How I got out of Edwardsville is unimportant. I had no car, and I sure didn't steal one. I left with \$50 and a suitcase full of clothes. As far as the F.B.I. and C.I.U. were concerned, I disappeared off the face of the earth. I stayed in Chicago that night and the next day one block from police headquarters.

On the day of my court appearance, all hell broke loose in Edwardsville. The C.I.U. were there with their brief cases bulging, and when they found out I was gone they started throwing their weight around, making false accusations and raising hell. The sheriff just told them the only payoffs he heard of was made in Chicago. They had to lug their fat brief cases back to Chicago.

Let me state this here and now. There is no organized crime in that sheriff's county. And I never once paid him or

anyone of his police or jailers one dime. Nor did they ever ask. And I am certain they would have charged me with bribery if I had tried, I never ever saw them beat or mistreat a prisoner all the time I was in their jail. And I met plenty of prisoners in their jail. Everyone got each and every one of their constitutional rights and I never once saw anyone granted any extra or special privileges, each man got what he was entitled to.

I am happy the C.I.U. set up my whole arrest down there, cause it was all illegal as hell. They were just interested in killing me, so as far as they were concerned, nothing had to be legal. But if the sheriff would have set up that arrest, it would have been legal, and my ass would have been on the way to prison for possession of burglary tools and guns.

I am not certain if the outfit made a deal with C.I.U. or if the outfit just saw a chance to use the C.I.U. If the outfit was using the C.I.U., it was not the first time. Often the right word has been dropped in the right place at the right time and the Chicago police has wound up killing someone the outfit wanted out of the way anyhow. The police department has a zero average on solving Chicago gangland killings. I think they have solved two or three in a hundred murders.

When I disappeared, the F.B.I. questioned my wife. She couldn't tell them anything, she didn't know anything. The C.I.U. bothered her continuously, they was really out for blood. They made threats, they made promises, they offered money. No one knew where I was.

I was running like hell and staying just one step ahead of the F.B.I. I usually worked as a bartender. When the boss would ask for my social security number I'd give him a phony one and quit. I left South Bend the day before the

F.B.I. showed up. I left Cleveland a week ahead of them. I left Philadelphia ten minutes ahead of them. The only thing that saved me that time was it was windy. I stopped in front of the joint, put up my hands to light a cig, and as I did I looked through the window. I saw two agents showing the boss a photo. He was shaking his head yes. I just kept walking.

I didn't go through any changes, dyeing my hair, beards or disguises. I stayed just like I was.

Finally I ended up in New York working as a cook for \$1.00 an hour at a Cobbs Corners Pancake House from seven a.m. till twelve p.m., fifteen hours a day. I never cooked before in my life. They learned me to cook.

When I started work for Cobbs I used the name Johnny Williams. I moved into a cheap rooming house at 52nd and 8th. It's a miracle I didn't get busted, I was so out of place it was pitiful. When I was a thief I bought nothing but \$200 suits, \$70 and \$80 slacks. Can you imagine how I looked in that scummy rooming house and going to work at Cobbs in those clothes? The managers and waiters noticed it. I kept stalling them for my social security. I knew I had to get I.D., I couldn't last without it. I was not going to steal it, and I couldn't call the outfit. I had to take a bad chance. I bought a four dollar pair of pants and a cheap shirt. I walked into the post office on 34th St., picked up an application blank for social security, put my age as eighteen and mailed it under the name Johnny Williams. In a couple of weeks I got it back.

My next move was to West 115th to a decent apartment. I opened a bank account. I was getting check stubs and building legitimate I.D. that would check out. I worked for Cobbs six months and I became a good and fast

cook. My next job was as a cook at Glucksterns' Restaurant on 49th St., at much better pay. Then I joined the union, got a union book. More I.D.

Then I called my wife. I said, "Don't try to talk, take this number down, leave that phone, go to a pay phone and call." I was waiting in the subway on 43rd St. for her to call. She called in about fifteen minutes. That was the first time I had even attempted to contact my wife. I told her I had worked every day for six months. We were both happy. I told her to call the next night at ten sharp. I gave her the number of a phone booth on 59th. This way we would not be set up on a phone tap. And even if we were, not even my wife knew where I lived or worked, and New York is a big city.

Next night when she called I told her how to leave Chicago without a trace, and how I would get to her in New York. So even if anyone would have followed her out of Chicago they still would not have caught me. She changed cabs and buses four times in Chicago, getting to the airport. She carried no suitcases or nothing. She disappeared from Chicago.

When she arrived at the airport in New York she caught a cab to 42nd St., switched cabs there, made two subway changes and came back to 34th St. And I met her.

Next day I switched jobs to the Louis Segal Restaurant, then from there to Carnegie's Delicatessen to make sure no one was on our trail. Then we went from New York to Las Vegas to San Francisco, and back to New York. I got a job as a chef for Longchamps Inc. and for nearly two years we saved every dime. I set up a fake work record at the Latin Quarter (which had closed) and a record from public schools in New York that would have been

almost impossible to check. Then with the money we had saved I bought a franchise for an International House of Pancakes in Greenwich, Connecticut.

I had run that Pancake House for about four months when one night the law caught up with me. I later found out that a clerk at the Post Office had identified me from an F.B.I. ten most wanted flyer. This was really funny because nearly the entire Greenwich Police and several detectives ate in the place. I am sure it never dawned on any of them I was on the ten most wanted list because I use to sit in the same booth and drink coffee and talk with them.

I always had a habit of calling the cooks before I went to the restaurant. When I called this Saturday, Dec. 20, 1969 the cook said four guys were there waiting on me, along with the chief of detectives Mr. Burke. There was only one reason the chief of police would inquire as to my whereabouts. (No employee of mine knew where we lived.) I told my wife the F.B.I. was at the restaurant, maybe now is the time to get this beef over with. I drove by the place, it was staked out. No question about it. Any burglar who could not spot that stake out would never last a week. I made a U turn and came back. When we walked in agents showed up from every direction. I was placed under arrest. I refused to identify myself. It took the courts one week to identify me and compile sufficient records. I refused to waive extradition to Colorado and I was held in Bridgeport Correctional Center, Bridgeport, Conn. in lieu of \$100,000 bond.

The main offices of Pancake House International heard of my arrest via television, radio, and newspapers. They had bookkeepers and auditors go completely through my records. I had in the last four months handled over \$75,000 in cash. My books were perfect, not one dime was

missing. My credit was accurate and well established, every bill was paid. I was operating a half a million dollar a year business and not one dime of stolen money was used to buy it.

I ran the Denver case down to Mr. Liskov, who was to be my attorney for the next two years, and to this day is one of my closest friends. I point blank told him, "I used to be a burglar for the outfit, but I quit stealing over two years ago, and have never stole anything since." I owed no one any favors, nor was I under any obligations, so therefore I did not want to call anyone for financial aid, for legal fees, or to post bond. I knew I could get money from the outfit, but then I would only be back where I started. Mr. Liskov could see I was sincere, and knew I meant what I said. He said, "O.K. we will fight this all the way."

12



Jail Break

Bridgeport Correctional Center right at that time had a tier set aside for what they called "maximum security" and they put me there. They didn't want any of us with the other three hundred prisoners. Tony Koozy, bank robbery; Carl White, bank robbery; Kraft, bank robbery; Jackie Reed, bank robbery and murder. (Jackie had one of the biggest bank robbery crews on the East coast.) Jo Jo De Lorenzo was also on our tier for escaping from the Connecticut prison and beating and raping the prison warden's daughter. Jo Jo was placed there on purpose to supply the warden George Mason with any information he could come up with. He would give up anybody to get a little wait off his rap. Everyone on the tier was well aware of this.

F.B.I. agents came to the center to try to question me. I refused to talk to any agents or police officers. I didn't want to talk to anyone. They were pretty sure I could lay some unsolved jewel robberies right in the lap of a couple of Chicago Mafia overlords. I remained silent, I had nothing to say. I didn't want to get involved.

Soon word came to me from the outside. Was I in any way interested in getting out? I asked the officer that brought me this word who had given it to him. He said it was an outfit guy named Bever. I said no I am not interested. By checking around I found out the guy was a top

Lieutenant for the Vito Genovese faction. I now had a phone number if I ever had to use it.

About a month later a Captain of the Center called me out. He said, "Listen I am behind on some juice payments, and I know these people who just sent you word. I would be able to do alot of good if you could ease them up for a week or two." I said I could try. He took me to a phone. I called the Main Line Diner, got Bever, and asked him if he could back off on this guy for a week or two. He said sure.

Then Jackie Reed approached me about escaping. He knew I would have no problems with the locks. I said, "Jackie the second one of those locks are touched they know it's me. I am really squaring up. I am not leaving. I am going to fight this beef."

Jackie said, "I can get plenty of help from the streets."

I still was not interested. I said, "Why don't you involve Jo Jo in this? He will go along with the program."

Jackie said, "Your're crazy, with this guy you wouldn't get started."

I said, "He will go along until he has all the details. And then you stop him from talking at the end. You and Jo Jo are artists, start working on material."

I told the Captain, "Say these guys don't have nothing to do all day, they want to know if they can get some paints and canvas and start painting." (Myself, I had a cell full of law books. I studied law constantly.) Next thing canvas started showing up on the tier. \$500 was dropped in the front office to make sure the canvas got in. The frame was hollowed out on one side and glued back perfectly. It contained two brand new carbon hack saw blades.

Sometimes inmate commissary deliveries were made to the front office on Saturdays as well as during the week. One Saturday a delivery man dropped off a case of Bit O Honey candy bars. No one in the front office had enough

sense to suspect anything. The case of candy set in the front office all day Saturday and Sunday, and Monday morning it was brought into the commissary. The screw who run the commissary would have sold the whole store for a dollar cash. Jackie bought the whole case of candy, and when he went through the candy he came up with a 38 and a box of shells.

I was given a job in the inmate's commissary three days after the gun and blades were in the joint. Warden Mason called me to the front office and gave me the job. This was the first time in the history of the institution an unsentenced inmate had such a job and privileges. I had free run of the place. I could go anywhere.

Jackie and Jo Jo went to work on the bars. The T.V. was turned up loud. But they had to be careful, it took them four days to cut the bars. Every day Jo Jo the stool pigeon was trying to make excuses to go to sick call or get out of the cage. Jo Jo the fat son of a bitch was losing 20 pounds a day trying to figure out a way to snitch. Someone was always awake in the cage and Jackie censored every letter going out.

The bars were cut and put back in with soap and a little green water paint to camouflage the cuts. The screws made ninety trips a day right by the cut bars.

The next day after lunch Jackie took the big wooden bench apart. The top plank was a 6 by 8, about 9 feet long. He was going to use it to knock out the bricks in the jalousie window, by the cat walk where there were no bars over the window. I knew when he started beating on the window every cop in the joint would be there, so I suggested to Jackie that he plug up the inside and outside tier gate just before he got ready to leave. That way none of the cops could get in once they heard the noise and ran back there.

That evening right after the eight o'clock count Jackie

jammed up both locks, got out the plank, and started beating the bricks out of the window. It was making so much noise you could hear it through the cell house, like two locomotives hitting head on. It seemed like he was pounding for hours. I thought he would never make it. The plank splintered. He hit again, about four bricks fell out, and the plank splintered to pieces. Jackie just squeezed through the window. Five cops ran up to our cage but they couldn't tell where the noise was really coming from. It was too much of an echo through the cell house. When they left, everyone run to the window. We saw the Chevy drive off, with Jackie waving good by.

Myself I was still determined to fight my beef in Denver. I needed two honest witnesses in the Chicago area with no type of record to put me in Chicago at the time of the Denver home invasion. I called Lenny Moranza, and him and his nephew gave me two sworn statements that said I was in Chicago at the precise time of the Denver beef. Lenny owed me a favor. I was the star surprise witness in a murder case in Chicago for his sister Rosemary in 1966. She had shot her husband Bob Sovach six times with a 38. Frank Phalen, a prominent Chicago criminal lawyer, called me to the witness stand. The D.A. had a good case going which I blew to pieces with my testimony. Rosemary was acquitted.

Mr. Liskov filed notice, came to Chicago, and took legal deposition in my case. But just when I was cooling off and getting out of the limelight, my ex-partner Jimmy Evans escapes from the Pennsylvania joint with Freddy Malchow. Jimmy had been on the ten most wanted list for two years, and he tried to make a deal with the F.B.I. to get out from under a beef. He said he had a lot of information on the Valerie Percy case. The F.B.I. listened to what he

had to say and then locked him up. They were no bunch of dingbats.

Then Bernard Carey and a few others saw a chance to get their names in the paper and take a free ride on the publicity. Jimmy said Freddy told him he had killed Valerie Percy and I was also involved. Personally I don't believe Freddy ever told Jimmy anything like that. I traveled many a mile of road with Freddy and Jimmy, and I am sure neither one of them knew anything about the killing other than what they read in the papers.

The Chicago papers had a field day with my photo and name. Carey made all kind of statements for a little publicity, but at no time did he ever question me about the Percy killing. At no time did he ever come to Connecticut or anywhere else to interview me. If he had of, he would have been taking a trip for nothing, because I would never have even bothered going to the visiting room to talk to him. And I am sure he knew this. But Carey will get his name in the paper at any expense, as long as it's not his own.

Then my brother Wayne got caught back in Illinois, got caught stealing a battery out of a car. He made a deal with the authorities. If they would not press charges against him he would finger me for a \$137,000 jewel robbery in Indiana and another jewel robbery in Peoria, Ill. The cops turned him loose, and both states filed warrants for me in Connecticut. I can assure you Wayne knew nothing, and whatever he knew couldn't have involved or convicted me. Mr. Liskov filed motions in Indiana and Illinois.

I started getting very depressed and discouraged, not about the Indiana or Illinois warrants, a conviction in either place was the least of my worries. But someone from Chicago or Colorado was really pushing the Denver case. It had to be the outfit, or the Chicago C.I.U. Why? What was

the payoff in my case? The C.I.U. and Area 5 and Area 6, robbery and burglary, are known killers and will frame or kill you in a second. Those three divisions all work as mostly one unit. I knew the cop I bribed was afraid I might talk, but god damn after three years all of them including the outfit must have known I was not talking. I was about ready to go to the outfit for bond money. Once on the streets money was no problem. I could make \$100,000 in twenty minutes. My wife said, "You don't call anybody. We are going to make this on our own."

And my attorney Mr. Liskov could see I was becoming disappointed. He knew I could make one phone call and have help. He spent much time with me. He was not only my attorney but a friend. He knew my whole life was wrapped up in my wife and baby. He knew I could call the outfit and get help. He said, "You don't need that kind of help, even if you have to go do time. At least you owe no one nothing and are free when you get out."

Then John King went to Denver in February 1971 and pleaded guilty for a ten to thirty year beef on the Denver robbery. I was pretty sure he was going to turn state's evidence on me. But even with him Denver would have one hell of a legal battle because that was all they had on me and nothing more. So I was not worried too much about anything King said on a witness stand. But I didn't have the money to go through any legal battle like this one. The only way I would go to trial there broke was if Mr. Liskov fought that case in Colorado. And that was going to be damn near impossible.

About this time a con told me about a guy with big connections who had over a million dollar diamond score right there in Connecticut. He said one of the stones was worth at least half a million. It was a home and he was sure

I could get it. I told him no one could be sure of that, and there were other people around who could get those diamonds. Besides I had quit. I couldn't make that score, I would be hurting too many people. Especially my wife and baby and my attorney Mr. Liskov. Those people had all given up too much and made too many sacrifices for me.

But I was interested in the score. When my wife came to visit me, which was every week, I just casually mentioned I had been offered a lead to a million dollar score, and it would make the bond, and cover all legal defenses in Colorado. She blew her stack. She said, "You have not even thought of stealing for four years and I have not went through all this misery so you can start again. So what if you get it and get away with it and beat the rap in Denver? You have not accomplished anything, it's all a total waste. It will never stop, you'll be right back where you started."

I left the visiting room disgusted. My mind was working overtime with that kind of money, it solves a lot of problems. I thought maybe she would feel different once I was on the streets.

With my job I sometimes had a chance to steal a phone call. The next chance I got I called the Main Line Diner in Bridgeport. I asked for Bever Saviago. He came to the phone. I said, "Listen I been hearing a rumor about something."

He said, "I can't talk on this phone. How long can you hang on that phone?"

"Maybe two minutes or an hour. If somebody walks up the steps I have to turn it loose."

He said, "Give me that number, I will go to a pay phone and call it."

I was still in good shape when he called. No one was around. I said, "What about this score?"

He said, "Is that phone bugged or tapped?"

"After all this is a jail, but to my knowledge it's not. But in case it is talk as much in a riddle as possible. I'll pick it up."

"Do you know how much?"

"I been given a price."

"That is correct if not more."

"A house?"

"Yes."

I said, "I have a hundred thousand dollar bond on this beef, can you put up the money?"

"No, you will have to come out the hard way. Can you make it?"

"I am not sure, I have never really looked. Even though I work in the commissary there are quite a few doors between me and those streets. What kind of help can I get?"

"You can get what help you need from here."

"It will have to be very reliable."

"It will be, I'll handle it myself."

I said, "O.K. I have an appeal in the Connecticut Supreme Court. I will get a ruling next month, let's see what happens then. In the meantime I'll start looking, and I'll be in touch with you."

Even though I was an inside trustee I had to appear for every count and I was kept under pretty close surveillance. I knew where one of Jackie's saw blades was. But there was no way on earth I could cut a bar. Out of 300 inmates in that joint, 295 were stool pigeons. This had to be done alone and without attracting any attention. Another thing I noticed was that when a prisoner escaped or even attempted to escape, the *Bridgeport Post* blasted their picture and life history all over the front page, even if the guy was in on a

petty larceny beef. And I was their number one bad boy. So not only was I looking for a hole, I had to figure out a way to steal my records from two places, a locked cabinet in the clothing room where there was at all times three or four screws, and the front office desk where there was always five people all day. I had one hell of a job.

I checked out all three cell houses. There was no way on earth I could saw a bar without some inmate seeing me. And this joint was full of junkies, they would put their mother in the chair for a fix. So you can believe a stranger never stood a chance. I looked the clothing room file cabinet over. I figured I could open that lock with a set of nail clippers if I got the chance. I finally figured out Friday night on the eight o'clock count was the best shot on that one. The medic was off on Friday nights, and one screw went to get the medicine, the other went to the front office to turn in the count. I had about five minutes to open the lock, find my records, and then lock it back. Now I had to figure out a way to steal the picture and records from the front, from the large board. It was very easy, I could get them through the work release office. All I had to do was catch the desk real busy, say Mr. Reynolds wants so and so's records, and one of the cops would say, "Hell you get them you see I am busy."

I could get the records, but how was I going to get out? The only way I could see out of that joint was right through the front office. I would have to catch one screw in the office with his back turned working on the court slips. Then I would have to lay flat on the floor and pick the lock on the warden's office door. If the screw looked over the counter he would see me, and there was no way I could tell what lay behind the door once I was in the warden's office. Maybe there was no out that way. But that was the chance I would

have to take, that was the only route I could see that stood a chance, and boy this one was so slim you had to be crazy to even try it. Maybe I am crazy.

Bever Saviago came in on an overnight pinch by the Feds, perjury charge. He was catching a lot of heat and pressure from the Connecticut Crime Commission. By some method Bever was able to swing a deal never before ever done in the history of the Bridgeport Correctional Center. Bever managed to get placed on the same tier with me which was strictly for the trustees. We talked most of the night. I figured if I stood a chance to come out it would be the best shot on the fourth of July weekend when the staff was low. I wanted to hear what decision the Connecticut Supreme Court handed down on my extradition appeal. It was agreed. Bever would wait across the street from eight to eight-thirty on the third, fourth and fifth of July. My appeal was denied. I got ready to go.

Thursday morning, July first, I stole my photograph, my mittimas, bond, etc. from the front office. I tore them up and then flushed them. Friday evening when the screw went to turn in the count slip and the other cop went for medication, I picked the lock on the file cabinet. I just took my time and found my complete records, F.B.I. report, photograph, finger print cards, the works, and locked the cabinet back. I made it back to my cell, destroyed everything. Now there was no records of me anywhere in the prison. If anyone just accidentally inquired about me or I got a visit, they would discover my records missing, and I would really be jammed tight.

I tore apart a coat hanger, made a sharp point on one end and a flat point on the other. Next I stole a tablespoon from the officer's kitchen, wrapped the flat end with tin foil from a cigarette pack, and shoved it in the steel gate to

get an impression of the notches. Then I took the saw blade Jackie had left behind and notched the spoon. I tried it out, it was as good as a key.

On the fourth of July the staff was low, and I saw the car drive up at eight o'clock sharp. But there was too much action in the front office. I would never make it in time. Monday the fifth the staff was even lower, only old man Sullivan was in the office and he had worked a double shift. I was at my cell for the eight o'clock count, but the second the screws made it I left right behind them. I sure hoped they had not missed count cause I was going to make my move now.

I walked down to the front office from the North cell house, through the old cell house, and directly to the front gate on the side. I turned the lock with the spoon, stepped in between the steel door and the wooden door, stuck the coat hanger through the crack of the wooden door and lifted the latch and pushed the door open just a crack. I could look straight in at the office counter. The screws from the North cell house turned in their count slip at the count window, a slot with steel bars over it. Sullivan walked to within a foot of me, and the screws on the right were within a foot of me. They couldn't see me. I kept my eye directly on Sullivan. He picked up the count slip and turned to walk back to the counter and check the board against their count. When he turned his back I stepped through, dropped flat on the floor, and eased the door shut with my foot. This was it. I had to make it. I couldn't turn back. My heart was pounding like an air hammer. I crawled over to the warden's office door. Now all Sullivan had to do was look over the counter or some cop come in with a prisoner and it was over with. I shoved the flat end of the coat hanger into the lock. I could not do anything with it. I

changed ends. I still couldn't get it. I said to myself man get a hold of yourself, take your time, you're trying too hard and working too fast. I got calmer. I felt the lock turn. I crawled through. I am sure it was only a matter of minutes, but to me it seemed like twenty years. I locked the door from the inside.

I was in the warden's office, but there did not seem to be a way out of there. Then I saw a sliding canvas door behind the drapes on the left wall. I slid it back, it opened into the counselor's office. I stepped in there. I looked across the street and saw the car pull up, hit the dimmer switch twice, and then turn off the lights. Someone was setting there waiting. I tried every window but they were all locked down tight with paint. I checked the door that led down the steps to the front driveway and out to the streets. If I opened that door I had to take another gamble. If Sullivan was looking out that way he would have nearly a half block to walk down the driveway to the street. I could not take that gamble. I had taken too many already, my nerves were gone. I was too tight. I was so close yet so far.

I tried the windows again with every ounce of strength I had. The second window I pulled on came half way up, the paint had broke loose. I climbed out, hung from the ledge, and dropped about three feet to the ground. I ran across the prison yard. With all the lights on it was lit up like high noon. I opened the car door, Bever was waiting. We got out of there. The whole thing had taken only twenty minutes.

Bever asked if I wanted to stay in Bridgeport or go to New York. I said New York. I started changing clothes, they were not a perfect fit, but I had to come out of the prison clothes. I threw them out on the Interstate. Every toll booth we stopped at I figured this is it.

Bever told me about the score. The guy owned a trucking company, and he was a diamond collector who had a stone worth \$500,000 plus several other pieces.

By the time we got to New York I was more at ease. We went to a restaurant on 49th and 7th Ave. I was introduced to Frank Ebali, known as Tommy Tyan. He said he understood I could get those diamonds. I said I was not sure of anything, and was he sure the guy had them? They were positive he had them. I asked if they knew where he lived. They said yes, did I want to go look at the house right now? I said no, I needed a few days to get adjusted. They wanted to know what I would need to be able to go to work. I said a driver's license, and a work car, the tools I would have to buy myself. Ebali gave me \$500 and said, "Listen enjoy yourself for a week, but be careful. Call this number if you need me. We will meet here next Monday at eight o'clock and get down to business."

I said, "One more thing. If I am able to get this score, what is in this for me?"

Frank said, "We will discuss that when you turn the stuff over. Let's not all count money before we got any to count."

I left and checked into the Taft Hotel. After two years in the joint the feeling of being free was undescrivable. I really wanted to call my wife and tell her I was in New York. But I could not contact her that night. I had to let her go to the joint and try to visit me. If she didn't show up they would figure she knew I was going to escape.

I slept that night, had a nice breakfast for the first time in two years. I walked down to 42nd St. and Broadway, bought a New York paper and a Bridgeport paper, stopped at a clothing store, bought some clothes, and went back to the hotel. I checked the New York paper, there was

nothing. I checked the Bridgeport paper, there it was. But it was not the usual Bridgeport write up. My photo was not in the paper, (because I destroyed the records) and the only thing they had was "Frank Hohimer, one of the country's ten most wanted men, escaped from a prison cell last night. He was discovered missing at 11:20 by personnel. The manner in which he escaped was not disclosed." They didn't "discover" how it was done because they didn't have the faintest idea and they did not want to look as stupid as they are. Now they know.

Next evening around nine o'clock I called my wife. She said, "I went to visit you today. They grabbed me the minute I walked in."

I made arrangements to meet her the next day on a 42nd St. subway so if she had a tail they would not pick me up. When we met I told her about the big score. She said, "Hey that is really beautiful, and I am sure if you go to get it you will be successful. Then you will have everything you need except a wife."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "Now you are free, that's fine, let's go home and play with the baby."

"Hell I can't do that."

"That is exactly what I am trying to tell you. You're not really free. I am sure you can run, and I have no doubt you will be twice as hard to catch this time, but someday it will have to happen."

"Then you want me to give myself up?"

"That has to be up to you. I'll stick by you no matter what you decide."

I said, "O.K., I'll be in touch with you."

I went to a different hotel. Now I was really up tight. It was just like old times. The F.B.I. looking for me, the

cops looking for me, pressure on me from the mob. O.K. if the cops got to me I was just going back to jail. If the outfit got to me I'd wind up in the East River or in a trunk out in Brooklyn.

I don't think I slept that night. I just day-dreamed or spaced it out. I came up with a million solutions, but none outweighed my wife and baby. Not only did I love them, but no where on earth can you buy that kind of loyalty.

The next day I walked into a pawn shop on 8th Ave. where I knew the people well. The first thing I heard was, "Man you were all over T.V. last night, Channel 5 news." I tried to bluff it out. I said, "You mean where I won the appeal?" "No, where you escaped." I turned around and walked out. I walked clear over on the east side, on Lexington and 60th Ave. I went in a bar and ordered a coke. When I looked up in the mirror I saw I was seated next to a couple of detectives. They were telling the bartender about a pinch they made. I didn't panic. I drank the coke and walked out. But I think that incident made my up my mind. That evening, Thursday, I called the F.B.I. in Newark, New Jersey. Why there? I did not want to wind up in the Toombs in N.Y.

Some agent answered the phone. I gave him my name. He said to hang on. I knew he was having another agent trace the call so I said, "I'll save you some trouble. I am in the subway on 42nd St. Now you figure out which train I am going to leave on and where I am going to get off. There are only eleven million people in New York, I shouldn't be too hard to find. But if you'll be cool I'm going to turn myself in. I just don't care to get shot in the back." I hung up.

Next day I went to several shows. I called the same agent at six o'clock sharp. He said, "I have your record or quite a bit of it in front of me."

I said, "Fine, I will turn myself in at midnight Sunday."

"Why not now?"

I said, "No, I am going to try and make contact with my wife and if I spot any agent or any tail anywhere near her or my home, I will not be in Sunday. Can I go home until Sunday?"

He said, "No, we do not have the authority to grant that, but I talked to one agent in our office who knows you personally. He assured me your word is good. If you say you will be in Sunday you will be here. But if you are arrested between now and Sunday it will not be the same as a turn-in."

I said, "Have no delusions, I will not be arrested."

He said, "O.K., I'll see you Sunday."

I called my wife and I told her I had just talked to the Feds and I was going to turn myself in Sunday night. I could tell it was really a load off her mind.

Saturday night I made the last illegal entry I'll ever make in my life. She was cooking dinner for herself and the baby. I slipped the lock, stepped in, and closed the door. She had not heard or saw me. I said, "Hi," she almost went over the top of the stove. She said, "You bastard you nearly scared me to death, I should have had the chain on the door." I had to smile. How in the hell would that keep a pro out? I played with the little guy till he fell asleep. He was only twenty days old when I first went to jail, he was almost 2 years old now. Josie and I talked most of the night. She had to work the next day, and the little bum had to go to the sitter, because if any agents were watching the house, they would notice anything abnormal in her habits. She came home at four, we talked until ten o'clock. I said, "Babe it's time to walk the last mile." She said she really hoped this was not something we would both regret the rest of our life.

I said we didn't have much choice, it was the only chance we had to take.

When we got to the F.B.I. office there was a guard at the door. He looked at a photo he had in his pocket and let us in. We went upstairs. One of the agents used to work the Chicago area. He said, "You done quite a bit of work for Milwaukee Phil and Leo Rugendorf at one time."

I said, "Yes at one time, but somehow I have to get my life straightened out."

He said, "It's late now, you're tired, so is your wife. We will lock you up and I will be around to talk with you tomorrow."

I said, "The only thing I ever said to any agent in my life was no statements."

The next day the agent and his partner showed up, we talked for about an hour. He was trying to convince me the only way out was to go to Chicago and talk to the Strike Force. I asked him if he was fucking nuts. He said no but I was. He said, "You want out of this god damn bunch of snakes so you make a half-ass attempt to go part way. It has to be all the way or nothing. How in the hell can we help you when you are not even trying to help yourself? The outfit could care less if you get a hundred years in the joint. You are really out in deep water and no shore in sight."

I knew he was telling me the truth. I was positive of three guys they had wasted with time, Freddy, Jimmy, and Billy Brown.

"Besides," he said, "an East Coast contract will go out on you now."

I couldn't figure out where he was coming from with that statement, as I had not said a word about the outfit helping me bust out. I said, "What makes you think an East Coast contract is out on me?"

He said, "When you busted out you disappeared too

fast, too clean, and too smooth. You made it to New York too quick, you had money and clothes too fast. All of these add up to help. We know you have been in touch with the East Coast mob for the past few months. They had to have something like diamonds on their mind, why else would they stick their neck out doing you a favor? To be truthful we never figured you would make it out of the joint. We just overlooked how good you are with locks. When you turned yourself in, that was the double cross. We knew a contract would go out then, and even if you had made the score, chances are you would have wound up in a trunk or in the East River. They would never have given you your end of the deal, you are just too hot.”

I knew he was right. Then he said, “You really don’t have much of a choice in this matter. All you are doing right now is standing in front of the Devil’s furnace.”

I said, “Man I have to have some time to think about this. I know I am uptight, but there has to be a way out.”

He said, “There is, so take a few days and see if you can find it.”

In the next few days, the thoughts that passed through my mind would fill ten volumes. But finally it all came down to two. Number one, my wife and baby. They had both given up too much, suffered too long and made too many sacrifices. There is no price worth their love and loyalty, it could never be replaced in a million years for no kind of money. I will spend the rest of my life trying to make it up to them. Number two, the cops and the outfit in Chicago. The borderline between the mob and the coppers is like the borderline between love and hate. You can’t tell where one ends and the other starts. It would take an expert with more knowledge than I have to tell who is who. Someone like Ovid Demaris who wrote *Captive City*, sharp

as he is, missed half of them on both sides of the fence. If I was standing in front of the Devil's furnace, there was plenty of people ready to open the door for me.

Three days later, the agents were back. I asked the agent what kind of a deal we could make. He said, "No deals, this will be completely out of my hands. You want your life straightened out, I am sending you to some people in Chicago who can get it done."

I said, "Pal you have to be kidding. I would not talk to the Chicago cops if you told me I could go home in the next hour. While I was talking to one, another would be on the phone calling the outfit."

The agent said, "If any one of these guys call the outfit it will be to hand them an indictment. You are going right straight to the Special U.S. Attorney, Sheldon Davidson, who is in charge of the Chicago Strike Force on Organized Crime and Racketeering."

The Strike Force issued a Habeas Corpus, and one week later I was in Chicago.

Sheldon Davisson, Pete Vaira, Terry Lord, Lee Hawk, Herb Beigel, were all special U.S. Attorneys who work with the Strike Force. They answered to no one with the exception of Henry Peterson, Assistant U.S. Attorney General, and I found out they were all honest men.

Course what I was thinking was, "What is the least time I can make a deal for?" I asked Davisson. He said point blank, "There is no way we can make a deal with you. That will be up to the Court. Anything you tell us will be used against you. But here is what we can and will do. You are the one person in Chicago who can take two of the most cold-blooded killers in the city off the streets, Leo Rugendorf and Milwaukee Phil Alderisio. Help us nail them, and in return we will place your family and you under

security and protection. And once you are released from prison, you will be re-located with your family.”

For the next two years, it was damn like me, Bob Keane, Sheldon Davidson, Terry Lord, Herb Beigel, Pete Vaira, and Lee Hawk were all married. I saw these guys more than they saw their wives. I was moved from Cook County to damn near every county jail in the surrounding area. I was so god damn tired of moving, I was ready to give up. I could not even receive a visit from my wife or mother unless they were given permission through the Strike Force. I think I argued with every U.S. Attorney in the Federal Building. I got so I even knew most of the secretaries by first name. One day I had a visit, my wife and son come to see me after I was sentenced. Him being little and inquisitive, I just let him wreck one of the Strike Force offices (my wife was out somewhere). He throwed files all over the office. The U.S. Attorney liked to shit when he come in and saw that.

I had committed so many burglaries and robberies, I couldn't possibly remember them all. They had me listed for millions of dollars worth of robberies and they were off on only five scores. One thing I must say, they never tried to give me any raps that were not mine, and they left any unsolved ones unsolved. Most state agencies will give you any rap whether it's yours or not. Even the ones that were mine, I had to mention some specific thing they could check out.

I recall one specific case. I knew I made the score, but I just couldn't remember the house. But then it dawned on me. This was the house where a broad was sleeping on her stomach in the nude, and I recalled she had a birth mark on her ass. The agent jumped up from the desk and said, “God damn it try to remember something else. How in the

hell am I supposed to check that out?" I said, "Why not take the broad out to dinner?" The next day he said yes that was my score all right.

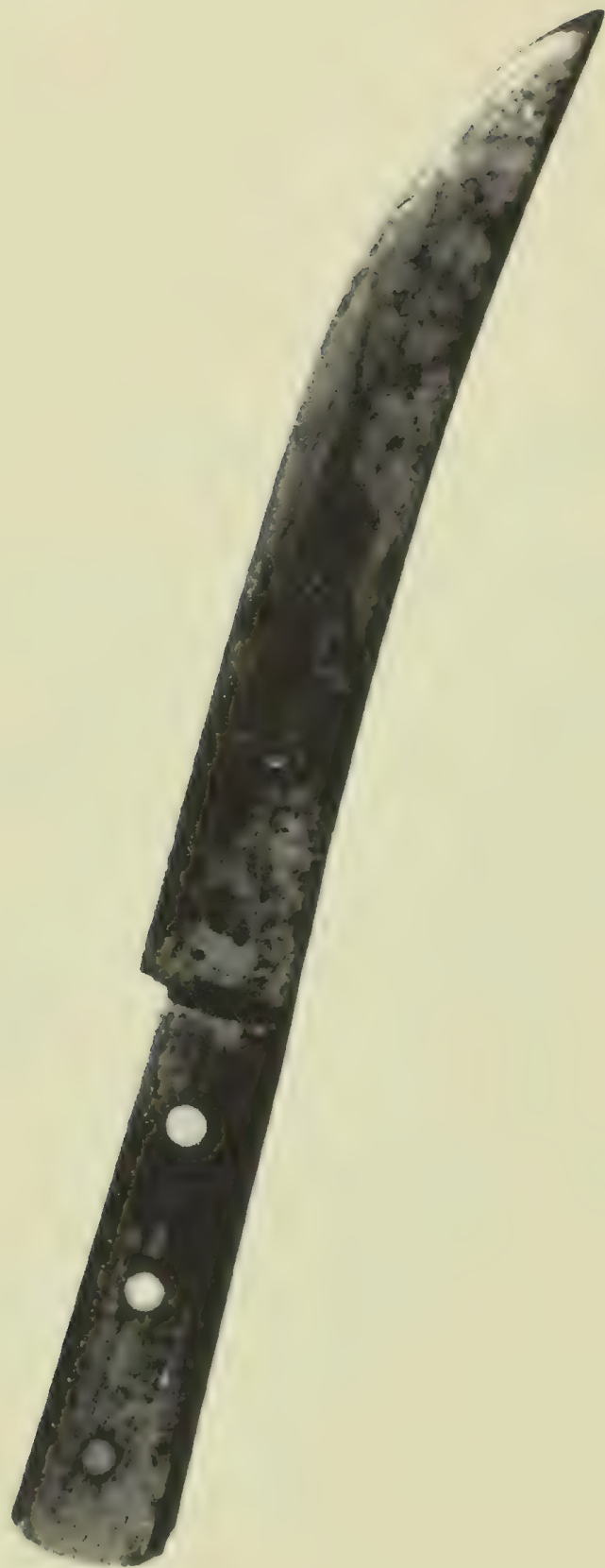
The Strike Force knew more about the C.I.U. than I could have known in a thousand years. They knew when they hit my house without a search warrant, they knew when and how they bugged my cars and phone. They knew the whole thing was illegal, plus a lot of other things they never even let me know they knew. The Feds are like a bunch of pack rats, every little bit of information they get they pack it away until it adds up. Then they get the files out.

As soon as Rugendorf and Milwaukee Phil heard the Strike Force had me they were not sleeping too well at night.

One month after I was back in Chicago, Milwaukee Phil had a heart attack and died in the Federal Prison at Marion, Ill., where he was doing a fifteen year sentence for extortion. It is for certain he had a lot easier death than some of the people he gunned down and tortured.

Rugendorf was handed two indictments by the Feds. He probably said to himself, I have really got some problems. So he decided to give me some problems. He accused me of murdering Valerie Percy.

13



The Valerie Percy Murder

I think the Percy family should have an honest accounting of their daughter's death, and be allowed to bury her and forget the whole tragedy. This case is dragged up every time some cheap politician, newspaperman, or kinky copper wants his name in print or to make a little publicity, even when they don't have the slightest idea of what the hell they are talking about. They are just making a lot of waves, trying to convince the public they are doing one hell of a job, or just trying to get a little heat off their own backs. If they are as interested in justice as they proclaim, let this same bunch show you their records of what they have really done with the big time criminals. I can tell you their batting average is zero.

This book gives me a chance to clear up some of the lies that have been told about me in the Percy case. And to straighten out some lies I have told about it myself.

Valerie Percy was killed September 18, 1966. Nobody thought of trying to pin the murder on me until 1969 when my old partner Jimmy Evans was captured after he had escaped from the F.B.I. Evans said to some police officer that he had information on the case. He stated that Freddy Malchow had confessed to him in jail in Pennsylvania (this was just before they escaped and Freddy was killed when he jumped into the river) that he had killed Valerie. This

implicated me because both of those guys had worked with me. The *Chicago Sun Times* got ahold of the story, and then Bernard Carey issued a big press release that said he was personally going to Connecticut to interview me in jail. He never came, he just wanted the publicity.

Why would Jimmy finger Malchow? The odds are a thousand to one that he was trying to make a deal to shorten his time. What really is hard to understand is why a newspaperman will believe everything a convicted rapist and thief will tell him and then publish that crap for everyone to see.

In 1971 I escaped from jail and then turned myself in to the F.B.I. A couple of weeks later I was sent to Chicago, and from that day forward I was in the hands of the Chicago Strike Force on Organized Crime. Like I already said Bob Keane spent several weeks with me going over burglaries I had committed, and I left none of them out. At this same time he also asked me about the Percy murder. I am pretty sure I mentioned that William Jackson might know something about the case, and I might have mentioned that Malchow told me he did it. If I made that statement, I want to clarify it right here and now. Freddy Malchow never in his life made any such statement to me about killing Valerie Percy or anyone else. I am pretty sure that I told Bob Keane he may have said something like that, but that was only to try to lighten the load I had on my back. It was a lie if I said it. I am only speculating when I mention anything relating to the Percy murder.

Then another real reliable witness claims I was the murderer, Leo Rugendorf. I have already said enough about Leo so you can judge if you should believe him. Why would he tell this lie? He wanted to impeach any testimony I might make against him in his forthcoming trial.

The last day of my trial Leo is driven to the Federal Building by his chauffeur. His mistress pretends to be his nurse. He makes a dramatic entrance into the courtroom on a stretcher. The Judge leans out over the bench and Leo acts like with his dying breath he is revealing a great secret that has been troubling his conscience. He says Frank Hohimer is the one who killed Valerie Percy.

The Strike Force was smart enough to see through this and took it for what it was worth, a bunch of bullshit. But Art Petacque, a reporter for *Chicago Sun-Times*, put it all over the front page, even though Rugendorf's story was that I had told him I killed Valerie by hitting her with a pistol and you could read in any newspaper that she was stabbed to death.

Petacque also got ahold of my brother Wayne, and Wayne said that I had told him I did it. Everyone who has ever met Wayne knows that he is the worst liar in the world. I have done everything to help him, but he cannot be helped. He is a very sick person, he has a gambling sickness which is worse than being a junkie. He was sick enough to be interested in the \$50,000 reward that Senator Percy had put up.

So Bob Lamb and John Nebergal of the Illinois State Police came out in 1972 to the Vermont State Prison to interview me. I was pretty bitter about the time I had just gotten and I was also up in the air as to why in the hell they would bother me about the case. Thinking the situation over I figured I better tell a few lies and they would just come up with the idea I was one lying bastard and leave me alone. That is why I dreamed up the idea that Malchow had showed up at my place wearing bloody clothes and that I had burned them in the incinerator. I said my wife Holly, William Jackson, and Jimmy Evans could verify this story

because I knew none of them could and the cops would find out that I was lying. There never was any bloody clothes. I am sure that Nebergal and Lamb soon found out I was lying and just dropped the entire incident right there. So I figured I was through with the Percy case for all times. It sure did not work out like that.

In November 1973, Art Petacque and Hugh Hough (another *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter) show up with my brother and some cop named Keating here at Fort Madison prison. There was no fair warning of their coming, and no one was even supposed to have my address. They had to get it from the Justice Department in some kind of way. They wanted to know about the Percy case. I told them the same crazy story I told to John Nebergal and Bob Lamb, only I added a little more to it. I had picked up some baloney from John Nerbergal and Bob Lamb about an attorney having some tapes or something pertaining to Evans that he would not release. I don't really recall for certain what the issue of the tapes was, but I know it was mentioned. So I figured I might as well put more tapes in this attorney's office. I knew then when they asked the guy about it he would have to say no because I never made any tape to start with. I was just telling some more lies so they would leave me alone. I never dreamed that Petacque and the other reporter had come down here specifically to put a murder rap on me whether it belonged to me or not. But that is what they tried to do, and what did Petacque and Hough get for it? A Pulitzer Prize.

Once the story broke, all the creeps started coming out of the woodwork. A guy named Stanfield jumped into the act. Him and Wayne are close associates. I did give him clothes once, but he was never a friend of mine. He was just a petty larceny bum that hung around one of my bars and

spent his money on the pool tables and across the bar. I had trouble with his bunch of cronies and whacked him and a few of them around in the bar one night because they had threw a beer bottle and knocked a girl in the head. I threw them out of the bar, and they never come back again.

Anyway, Stanfield claims one night at the Rock-a-go-go I asked him to case the Percy mansion with me. I would never have asked him to case anything with me. What would I need him for? I could have taken half a dozen women in the Chicago area and drove through any neighborhood and they would have not known what I was doing. I wouldn't trust Stanfield accross the street, let alone on a score, and I am not even sure I owned the Rock-a-go-go at the time Valerie Percy was killed. I may have, I am just not certain.

Another thing Stanfield overlooked is that none of my partners ever knew where I was making a score until I made it. That way I never had to worry about the cops being there waiting when I walked in. (The only score I ever fooled with for a long time was the Indianapolis score and that was because it was a hard one to make.) So Stanfield is lying about the whole Percy thing all of the way through.

Then Gail Anderson, Barry Ricketson's girlfriend, claims that I told her I did the murder. Gail, the ugly duckling, I am not sure whether she is to be pitied or what. She is a girl I have never treated very nice, but mostly because she is associated with the Stanfield mob. I think Gail first come up with this idea when she was a witness in the Rugendorf case. Her and I both know that she is lying, and I am sure that some day it will come back to haunt her just like all of my lies have caught up with me. She detests me because I told her to keep them bums and tramps out of my house she was always dragging up there. She lived

across the hall from me and my wife, and she always had a bunch of them bums up there.

So those are the kind of people who have testified against me. A Mafia murderer, a two-bit thief, a two-bit broad, and my crazy brother. The Strike Force on Organized Crime, the people who know the score, they are not goofy enough to believe a bunch of idiots that walk in off the streets and accuse everyone in sight. They do not give a damn who you are or what connections you have got, and they are not surmising anything. When they make an arrest they have got you. They investigate. They are not seeking publicity, it comes to them naturally because they are doing the job they are paid to do. No, I have no reason on Earth to praise them, they put me in jail for interstate transportation of stolen diamonds and jewelry, \$200,000 worth of them. I never received any breaks in the courts. Interstate transportation carries a ten year sentence, and they gave me every day of it on all three counts. But I was guilty as hell. They knew this, they were not guessing at it, and they did not need a bunch of nuts to say so. I respect the hell out of that. Those men are serving the public, and they do the job they are paid to do even if it is one of their own that is wrong. Like Mr. Otto Kerner, he went to jail.

The C.I.U. issued a press release saying I am too crazy to take a lie detector test. I don't know, maybe I am a little crazy, maybe we all are. But I am sure as hell not crazy enough to let them give me a lie detector test. In fact I am positive my intelligence rates on or even above the same level as theirs. Maybe even a little more, as they never nailed me as a burglar. I will make them a propostion. I will take a lie detector test if they will take one. They can propose my questions and I will propose theirs. We will see whose questions blow up the machine first.

I am just thankful to God that Senator Percy is as honest and powerful as he really is. Why? The man does not want an innocent person to be convicted of the crime. He wants the actual murderer of his daughter. And if ever anyone in the world is pulling for him to get that wish, I am the one.

I regret from the very depths of my heart that I hindered the investigation in any way. I can only admit to the world that I was one big goddamn liar.

I have paid a terrible price and I have also learned a grim lesson. If you ever do business with the Mafia, they own you. The only time they ever turn you loose is when you are in the grave, and I am not even too certain about that. Their money reaches many many places, and payoffs to the right politician can cause any cop in the nation to be transferred from vice to traffic, from the day shift to the night, or even clear out in the boondocks to where he sees nothing and hears nothing. And also the same politician can move him right up the ladder from nothing to commander.

But regardless of what happens, I know I am out of the Mafia and I intend to keep right on staying out. I don't recall any one ever handing me a contract to sign when I was born telling me how long I had to live. If I go tomorrow, that is the way the good Lord sees fit for me to go. I have no regrets for the decision I have made. If I am released tomorrow the government will never as long as I live take me off of parole. But that does not matter to me because I will never be back inside of a jail. In one sense they are doing me a favor. I know I could never get away again with anything even if I wanted to so I will not be tempted to try. But the most important thing to me is this. I know that I can pick up a telephone, no matter where in the

nation, and call people like Pete Vaira, Terry Lord, Sheldon Davidson, Herb Beigel, and many more too numerous to name. Any problems I have, one of those people will give me the answer to it. Or if they don't have it they will damn sure turn to those that do have it. I will get help and advice if and when I need it, and that is more than I could do before.



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